1047

# DISOBEDIENCE.

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A NOVEL.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

*BY THE AUTHOR OF PLAIN SENSE.*

"Unlimited obedience is due only to the Universal Father of Heaven and Earth. My Parents may be mad or foolish; may be wicked and malicious; may be erroneously religious, or absurdly scrupulous. I am not bound to mandates, either positive or negative, which either religion condemns, or reason rejects. When I suffer for my own crimes; when I may be sued for my own debts, I may judge, by a parity of reason, of my own happiness. The Parent's moral right can arise only from his kindness, and his civil right only from his money."

JOHNSON'S LETTERS TO MRS. THRALE.

1798

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# DISOBEDIENCE.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

## CHAP. I.

MARY now found that ſhe had not indeed a moment to loſe. The urgency of the circumſtances over-ruled all her objections as to throwing herſelf on William and Mr. Ellis, and having found in Lady Caroline's dreſſing-room materials for writing, ſhe took the preſent moment, while her Ladyſhip was ſtill engaged in the buſineſs of new furniſhing, to write thus to William:

" At the moment when I imagined I
" was going to liberty, I found myſelf en-
" trapt. No hand but your's can deliver
" me; I therefore ſcruple not to demand
" your aſſiſtance; fly to me the moment
" you receive this: Heaven ſend you may
" not come too late! I cannot inſure my-
" ſelf a week from becoming the wife of
" Lord St. Albans, who after all takes me
" but from pity. Ah! William, you and I
" have no notion of the refinement that
" prevails amongſt thoſe beings of a ſupe-
" rior order, yclept lords and ladies; as it
" is probable my intellects are too dull ever
" to adopt or underſtand their reaſonings,
" haſten to replace me in a ſtation of life
" where plain ſenſe, and plain honeſty may
" be ſufficient guides for my right con-
" duct."

" I can ſuggeſt no method how you
" ought to proceed; our kind, our beloved
" Mr. Ellis will give you the beſt counſel.
" The circumſtances I write in, and which
" I have not time to explain, will, when

"known, exculpate me in his eyes for an "alteration of the conduct which he had "sanctioned with his approbation. I come "to you poor and disgraced. I will more "than double my industry and my dis-"cretion to avert the consequences of the "one, and to wipe off the stain of the other. "In the mean time I am obliged to talk "like a heroine, or act like a tragedy queen, "and my eloquence flows with so full a "stream as would surprise you, all unlike "the simple colloquies we used to hold "under the hawthorn bushes, and out-"jutting crags of the mountains and plains "of dear Llamamon. The time for plain "English will come again; yet forgive me "my dear William, if it is with pain that I "think of becoming your wife in the pre-"sent circumstances, when that which I "had promised myself should be my glory, "must be, in part, my disgrace. I am at "Stanwick Castle, in Cumberland, near "Long-Town. You must endeavour to "see our old friend Agnes, and by her

" means when you are once here we ſhall " be able to arrange all that is neceſſary."

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Mary having ſealed her letter went in purſuit of Agnes. Hitherto ſhe had never had any converſation with her, nor was there more than a tacit confidence between them. Mary was now aware that a change of circumſtances called for a different conduct; and as ſhe was never frank by halves, ſhe reſolved to leave no part of her deſigns concealed that it was neceſſary for Agnes to be informed of.

When ſhe had found her, " I know not Agnes," ſaid ſhe, " whether you are willing to run any hazard to ſerve me, but I have a letter here which it much behoves me to have ſecretly and ſpeedily conveyed to the poſt. May I truſt you with it? or muſt I ſeek ſome other perſon to whom to confide it?"

" Indeed,

"Indeed, Madam," returned Agnes, "you may ſafely truſt me with it; in ſerving you I know I ſerve Mrs. Morgan. She ſaved my poor mother's life in a fever, when, had ſhe died, her ſeven children muſt have gone to the pariſh. I can never do too much to ſhew my gratitude."

"My mother, on her death bed, charged me never to forget Mrs. Morgan's goodneſs; and indeed the very dogs teach us to be grateful."

"Ah! thought Mary; what are the prerogatives of high birth and noble blood of which I hear ſo much? Is not virtue native to a cottage as well as to a palace? Flows not the blood through the heart of the peaſant as warm with every benevolent feeling, as through that of the monarch? *as* native! *as* warm! I am too indulgent; let the mighty ones of the earth diſprove me if they can."

"After what you have ſaid," returned Mary to Agnes, "I will not ſo affront you by lamenting how impoſſible it is for me to

ſhew my gratitude to you. You muſt ſee I have very little power. Every day I ſhall have leſs: take however the whole of my little ſtore, more as a mark that I am ſenſible of your kindneſs, than as a reward for it. Upon that letter depends the future happineſs or miſery of my life. I am threatened with a misfortune from which nothing can ſave me but the ſafe delivery of that letter: the anſwer to it will probably be in perſon, can you undertake to ſee him who will ſeek to ſee you? and may I hope that by your means I ſhall be able to manage an interview with him?"

"I will ſee any body that you will order me to ſee," returned the girl, "and I will do every thing in my power to ſerve you."

"But this muſt be done with caution," ſaid Mary.

"Yes, I am ſenſible of that," replied Agnes, "I am not ſure that I am not ſuſpected already; not by my Lady, it would be a word and a blow with her; nor by Sir James, but by Mr. Wroughton,

and

and perhaps if we had not come down here ſo ſuddenly I ſhould have heard of it in a way I ſhould not have liked."

"All depends upon the next ten days," cried Mary, alarmed, "the happineſs of my whole life is at ſtake. If you think you ſhall ſuffer by aſſiſting me, give me the letter again, I will find ſome other method, or——"

"They can but turn me away," interrupted the girl," and I don't value my place a ſtraw in compariſon of being of uſe to any one Mrs. Morgan loves ſo dearly; only promiſe me, madam, that wherever you live, I ſhall live with you, as kitchen girl, dairy maid, what you pleaſe; methinks I could follow you all the world over."

"What chimeras fill your brain, my dear Agnes?" ſaid Mary, "do you not know that when I am gone from this houſe I ſhall have no ſervants? that I muſt myſelf work."

"Work! work!" replied Agnes, in utter aſtoniſhment, "you work, madam? with ſuch white hands, and ſuch delicate

 arms?

arms? why ſure you were born to be waited upon."

"I believe no one is *born* to be waited upon," ſaid Mary, "however ſuch things do happen in the world; but you may be aſſured that if I were born to be waited upon I ſhall diſappoint the purpoſes of my birth. But why ſhould work be ſuch a hardſhip? I hear you ſinging from morning till night; why ſhould I not do ſo too? I *have* worked, and then I was as gay as a lark; you ſee now what a melancholy figure I make. I was happy when I was poor. I have never been happy ſince I was rich. Happineſs does not depend upon riches, Agnes."

"I ſhould like to try however," ſaid the girl, "but as you have tried, Madam, perhaps you may be as well ſatisfied to be poor; and come what will, I will take care of the letter."

"Do ſo, my good girl," ſaid Mary, "and who knows, although you cannot work

work for me, whether we may not work together."

"God grant it," ſaid Agnes; "and Mary encouraged and exhilarated by ſuch proofs of real attachment, and friendly zeal, repaired to the breakfaſt room, fearing that the cauſe of her abſence might be inquired into."

She found Lady Caroline ſurrounded by pieces of carpeting and cotton furniture, and ſo occupied with her choice that ſhe had not once thought of Mary ſince ſhe parted from her.

"Where is Lord St. Albans?" aſked ſhe, the moment ſhe ſaw her."

"I left him in the garden," replied Mary.

"Left him!" returned Lady Caroline, "did I not order you to ſtay with him? know, Madam, I will be obeyed *au pied de la lettre* till I have transferred my right to

your obedience to Lord St. Albans, and that will not be very long firft."

Lord St. Albans entered juft then.

"You are a pretty guardian indeed, my Lord," cried Lady Caroline, "I thought I left my daughter in your care."

"I fhould be too happy indeed to be the guardian of fo lovely a creature, returned Lord St. Albans, "but I can never confent to be her jailer."

"Your delicacy, and your refinement are enough to ruin any girl," faid Lady Caroline, "and I fhould not wonder if you let Mary flip through your fingers."

Mary, willing almoft at any rate to put a ftop to the continual railing of Lady Caroline, faid—

"You fhall always find me, madam, happy to obey you in any thing I can; if I returned to the houfe fooner than you wifhed me to do, it was with no intention of

of giving you offence, and now I am here I am willing to employ myſelf in any way you ſhall direct."

"For what purpoſe did you run away from Lord St. Albans ſo impolitely?" ſaid Lady Caroline.

"I wiſh," ſaid Mary, "to arrange the few books I have with me, and to put my drawing materials in order: may I order ſome ſhelves to be put up in my room?"

"No, indeed," ſaid Lady Caroline, "I will have no ſecluding yourſelf in your own room; I expect you always to be in theſe apartments. Then pauſing—I think that compaſs window will ſerve for your *boudoir* admirably, and I'll engage for it you'll juſtify the name; there's good light; there's already a table there; and I ſuppoſe ſome of Sir James's wiſe anceſtors have been readers, for I proteſt here is a cupboard that muſt have been either for the purpoſe of holding books, or to lock up the family pickles and preſerves."

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI ... ORE
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She then laughed at her own wit, and gave orders that Mary's books and drawing boxes ſhould be brought down.

Mary, in whoſe boſom the mere over-flowings of Lady Caroline's rancour never excited any other feelings than mirth or contempt, made no reply, but with a half ſmile quietly ſat down in the place appointed for her *boudoir*, while Lady Caroline unheedingly turned to her upholſterer, and recommenced her directions, which this maternal dialogue with Mary had interrupted.

Lord St. Albans aſſiſted Mary in arranging her little property, and did it with an air of ſo much kindneſs and feeling, that ſhe could not help thinking herſelf obliged to him, for the ſofter manner, compared with Lady Caroline's, with which he purſued her miſery. He was both a proficient, and an amateur in drawing, and no ſooner had Mary unpacked her drawing boxes, than

he

he urged her to begin to exhibit the progreſs ſhe had made in this art.

Mary ſo little reſembled Lady Caroline, that although ſhe knew how to be both haughty and ſarcaſtic when improperly importuned, or inſulted, yet ſhe never felt herſelf ſo truly at home, as when ſhe was compliant and gracious; hence, even to Lord St. Albans, ſhe never betrayed any unneceſſary harſhneſs, and would have preſerved towards him the moſt undeviating civility, and good manners, had he never addreſſed her upon thoſe ſubjects where ſhe thought that it touched equally her honour and her happineſs, that ſhe ſhould teſtify her diſpleaſure, and cut him off from all hope.

She therefore immediately prepared to oblige him, ſaying, however, at the ſame time—

" My performance will be ſcarcely worth your notice: my leſſons have lately been ſo

wholly interrupted, and my time ſo cruelly miſuſed, that the little progreſs I had made at firſt, has been loſt, and I am ſo far from being able to ſatisfy others, that I cannot ſatisfy myſelf."

Lord St. Albans uttered a few words of encouragement, and Mary endeavoured to deſerve them. As ſhe proceeded, he ventured to direct, and gently to correct; and Mary, to whom the voice of inſtruction, and the means of improvement were always ſweet, forgetting for a moment all that ſhe had to fear from her inſtructor, ſaid, with a look of ineffable ſweetneſs, her fine eyes turned full upon him—

"Ah! my Lord, how amiable you might be if you would."——

Lord St. Albans enraptured, eagerly kiſſed the fair hand that held the pencil, and replied, "I will be any thing that my dear monitreſs wiſhes me to be."

"Yes,

"Yes, my Lord," cried ſhe, "repulſing him, but remember that if I wiſh you to be any thing but what you are, it is wholly for your own ſake. I can have no intereſt in your reformation."

"Yet would be its brighteſt reward I hope?" ſaid he.

"Your Lordſhip," ſaid Mary, "muſt ſurely draw your boaſted origin from Dutch anceſtors, for you ſeem to have no idea of doing any thing but for value received."

"And who has any other idea, my pretty philoſopher?" ſaid he.

"None of your Lordſhip's acquaintance I believe indeed," ſaid ſhe.

"Well, but take me into your own hands," returned he, "and make me what you pleaſe, and then take me for your pains."

"Your Lordſhip, I ſee, at leaſt acquits *me* of too great an attention to my own intereſt," ſaid Mary, "but if I were to new model your lordſhip, you would find yourſelf ſo totally another creature, that you would bluſh to receive that as a free

gift,

gift, which you now ſolicit with ſuch a mendicant boldneſs."

"Upon my ſoul I don't underſtand you."

"Muſt I ſpeak plainer?" ſaid Mary, "do you think it would conſiſt with *reformation* that you ſhould ſeek to violate the rights, long eſtabliſhed, of another? or that you ſhould wiſh to corrupt the ſimplicity of an honeſt heart, attached by principle and choice, to a life of ſobriety and reaſon?"

"Oh! upon the ground of principle and reaſon," returned he, "I think I cannot be afraid to meet you. Is there nothing that ſhakes your principles in abſolute and obſtinate diſobedience to the will of the authors of your being? Nothing from which your reaſon revolts, in meditating a connexion which will confound all diſtinctions of ſociety? diſtinctions that have been formed for the good of the whole?"

"I am too young, and too ignorant," replied Mary, "to be able to reaſon deeply. I muſt truſt, as guides for my conduct, to the

the ſimple dictates of my underſtanding, and the feelings of my heart. I appeal to my conduct for more than ſeventeen years together, whether I have not the higheſt ſenſe of the duty of children to their parents."

"Let my dear father and mother at Llamamon, ſay whether I was either diſobedient or obſtinate. I plead, indeed, no merit for my unreſerved compliance with their wiſhes; it was the natural effect of repeated conviction, that to obey them, and to be happy, were the ſame things. In my early youth, my obedience was unlimited and implicit: as I grew older I was not only allowed, but exhorted to think and act for myſelf: I was told that ſhortly I *muſt* walk alone, and that it was therefore neceſſary that I ſhould try my ſtrength. It was at this period, when pleaſed with myſelf, delighted with the preſent, and hopeful for the future, I learnt with equal aſtoniſhment and regret, that I had hitherto been a ſtranger to thoſe who gave me birth; that the habits and attachments of my youth muſt be broken;

broken; that I was ignorant and awkward; a creature rather to be tolerated than efteemed; that I had a crowd of new and incomprehenfible duties to ftudy; and that I was to facrifice gratitude, love, and reafon at the fhrine of ambition and avarice."

"I was told of obligations to a family who had abandoned me in the moft help-lefs ftate of infancy; of paffive and unbounded obedience to parents who did not love me; of the abandonment of all that I had been taught to confider as lovely, and the adoption of every thing that I had been inftructed to defpife or abhor. I was introduced into a new world, the manners of which fhocked me; where I faw the moft exquifite refinement, united with the groffeft indelicacy; the moft lavifh prodigality, joined to the moft contemptible meannefs; where ufeleffnefs was confidered as a dif-tinction; and helpleffnefs as a grace; where I found the principles of my religion fcoffed at, and its duties neglected; where awk-wardnefs was more unpardonable than vice,

and

and elegance more valued than virtue; where my ideas of juftice, purity, and truth were confounded, and where felf was the univerfal Deity, and difinterefteds treated as folly. In a word, where vice ftalked abroad adorned, and honour and virtue fhrunk back abafhed."

"On my being firft thrown into this ocean of incomprehenfibility, my Lord, fometimes I laughed, fometimes I cried, and fometimes I railed.—I am happy to add, I never admired."

"No wonder, however, if in fcenes fo new and aftonifhing, I found the little reafoning faculty that I poffeffed, difturbed; if I were unable to underftand the maxims that were endeavoured to be taught me, or refufed to take the obligations that were fought to be impofed upon me. I had one obftinate idea in my mind, of which, do what I would, I could not get rid; for the life of me I could not feparate the notion of kindnefs, from the parental relation, nor the duty due to fathers and mothers, from that

that due to him who made both children and parents. I ranfacked that little ftore-houfe of principles which the beft and wifeft of mortal beings had committed to my keeping."

"Here I thought I difcovered, that to facrifice happinefs to fplendor, was not wife; and that to abandon thofe in my profperity, who had fheltered and loved me in my adverfity, was not honeft. Yet, my Lord, I did not arrogantly refolve to adhere to my opinions, highly as I thought them fanctioned."

"I was promifed a twelve months time to compare the paft with the prefent, and to reconcile duties and obligations that appeared fo adverfe. To this promife there were annexed certain conditions, on my part moft faithfully performed; I need not tell your Lordfhip how they were obferved on the other. I will acknowledge however, that this perfidy tended much to the elucidation of my doubts, and the confirmation of my firft opinions. It contributed

buted effentially to reconcile duty and inclination; for however I might have hefitated to have fought my own happinefs in oppofition to the wifhes of a tender parent, I could never fcruple to prefer it to the will of a treacherous tyrant. I recognife not the parent in thofe who in my infancy configned me to poverty and contempt, evils as I now find in their opinion of the greateft magnitude: who reclaimed me in my mature years, only to exercife over me the moft defpotic tyranny and the moft unpitying oppreffion; who careffed me only to deceive, and who punifhed me only to torment. For an exiftence, fuch as they would entail upon me, I own no obligation, nor hold myfelf obliged to accept of evil from thofe hands, who never offered me good."

"And what are thofe diftinctions of fociety of which I am accufed of the criminal intention to confound? You fpeak, my Lord, as if my marriage with a fimple and worthy individual, was like the fhock of contending elements, which would over-turn an

univerfe

universe in their convulsion. I am unequal to such discussions. But if *any* suitability between persons who form the most intimate of all possible connexions, *is* necessary to the happiness of the individuals, or to the edification and advantage of society in general, it must be the suitability of minds and hearts; of habits of life, and modes of thinking."

"Were I to accept the honour your Lordship offers me, there could not be a more preposterous, or incongruous union than ours."

"The lately discovered accidents of birth and fortune, have made no alteration in my real self; and if you can look beyond the outward trappings, your Lordship will find yourself as much degraded by your connexion with me now, as if I had still continued in my cottage. Be assured, my Lord, my mind is as plebeian as ever, not a single high bred solicitude throbs at my heart; nor a single fashionable axiom has my understanding been able to comprehend.

We have not a ſentiment, or wiſh in common, and I am even ſo hardened in my folly, that I do not bluſh to avow that I prefer induſtry, to idleneſs; ſimplicity, to refinement; uſefulneſs, to ſplendor; and—but pray, my Lord, keep my ſecret,—virtue, to vice."

"Lovely tyrant!" ſaid Lord St. Albans.

"No tyrant, my Lord; no confounder, as you now ſee, of thoſe diſtinctions of ſociety which ought to be preſerved ſo inviolate. Do you keep your ſtation, my Lord; the ſtation your mind fits you for, and I will keep mine; and I will promiſe you, if no pity for my abject taſte diſturbs your high-born joys, neither will any envy of them on my part, break in upon my humble happineſs."

"And is this the method, my ſcornful fair one," ſaid Lord St. Albans, "that you take to intereſt my compaſſion in your favour?"

"Your compaſſion, my Lord!" ſaid Mary, "your compaſſion!—your ſtyle of courtſhip

courtſhip is really as extraordinary as every thing elſe about you: In all affairs of love, I have been uſed to give, and not to aſk compaſſion."

"Then thus let me implore——"

"No, no, my Lord," ſaid Mary, laughing, "I am too good an actreſs myſelf, to be moved by the tricks of the theatre."

"I am no actor," ſaid Lord St. Albans, ſullenly, "but tell you with a plain ſimplicity of truth, equal to your own, that you will alone owe to the compaſſion you deſpiſe, a ſafety from evils which now you dream not of."

"When I feel the advantage of your protection, my Lord," returned Mary, "I ſhall be ready to own the obligation; at preſent let us have done with the ſubject."

And with thoſe words ſhe reſumed her pencil; nor could all the efforts of Lord St. Albans, prevail with her to utter another ſyllable.

During

During the courſe of this converſation, Lord St. Albans had liſtened to Mary with aſtoniſhment, admiration, and reſentment, and the concluſion of it had been ſuch, that had not her beauty pleaded ſo irreſiſtibly to his ſenſes, that his reaſon could not be heard on the other ſide, he might have been induced to have dropt a purſuit, that it ſeemed equally adverſe to his honour and his happineſs, any further to continue. But as ſhe appeared more than ever charming in his eyes, ſo he was more than ever reſolved to poſſeſs her, coſt what it would, while the ſettled diſapprobation, and ſarcaſtic diſdain with which ſhe treated him, ſo hardened his heart, that he loſt all concern for thoſe ſufferings which he knew the pertinacity of his addreſſes would bring upon her.

## CHAP. II.

SOME days paſt without any alteration in the manners of the reſpective individuals, who compoſed the unfriendly party at Stanwick Caſtle.

Sir James was ſarcaſtic and unkind, Lady Caroline ill-natured and tyrannical, Lord St. Albans ſoft and inſinuating in his expreſſions, harſh and unbending in his purpoſes; Mary was melancholy, and generally ſilent; reſpectful, but cold when ſpoken to by her parents; haughty, and ſometimes ſatirical

ſatirical when addreſſed by Lord St. Albans. She was not ſuffered to paſs any time alone, but that which was deſtined to repoſe, and Lady Caroline took care, every evening, to lock the outer door of her apartment. In theſe circumſtances, ſhe had no reſource but her books, declining to purſue her drawing, as this employment gave Lord St. Albans pretence to attach himſelf more than ever to her.

One day, on coming into the dining room, ſhe was ſtartled with ſeeing, in addition to the uſual company, a young man, who by his dreſs and appearance ſhe immediately recognized as a clergyman. Her heart roſe to her throat.

"Oh! William," cried ſhe, to herſelf, "where, where are you now?"

Lord St. Albans introduced the new comer to her, by ſaying—

" My dear creature, condefcend to look with favour on Mr. Williams, as the man from whom I am fhortly to receive the greateft bleffing of life."

Mary, who could not by any mark of refentment, fhew that fhe underftood him, flightly courtefyed to the clergyman, and took her place.

" The greateft bleffing indeed, my Lord!" faid Mr. Williams, impolitely gazing on her,—" a bleffing that the gods might envy you."

Mary, fhocked with a fpeech fo profane, darted a look of anger at the fpeaker, and difdained a reply.

" Well faid, Mr. Parfon," cried Sir James, " I fee you are not quite an unbelieving Muffelman."

" Mr. Williams is a poet," faid Lord St. Albans, " who wifhed to foften the anger that

that he ſaw marked in Mary's countenance; and is ſo familiar with gods and goddeſſes in his poems, that he introduces them to thoſe who have no reliſh for ſuch ſociety."

Lady Caroline, who was never pleaſed when the pretenſions that ſhe ſtill made to admiration, were over-looked in the ſtronger claims of Mary, ſaid, peeviſhly, "pray let us talk of mortals;" and Mr. Williams, perceiving the ſlip he had made, artfully contrived to make his court ſo effectually to her, as ſoon to obliterate the offence he had given, and to make a conſiderable progreſs in her favour.

Mary ſat ſilent; meditating on the fate that now ſeemed ready to over-whelm her. She heard nothing from William—Her letter might not have reached him—He might be unable to come to her—Mr. Ellis might diſapprove his doing ſo. If the marriage ceremony were endeavoured to be performed, reſiſtance on her part would be

vain: ſhe had no friend to flee unto: there was no human power that could interpoſe and ſave her.

Loſt in theſe thoughts, ſhe forgot all who were around her. She caſt her eyes fervently to heaven, and with uplifted hands, and heaving boſom, while the tears ran in torrents down her cheeks.

"Oh! God," cried ſhe, "to thee I appeal!"—

"Good heavens!" ſaid Lady Caroline, "what is that romantic girl thinking about?"

"The immortals, like Mr. Williams," ſaid Sir James.

But Lord St. Albans haſtily riſing, and filling a glaſs of water—

"My beloved creature," ſaid he, "prey drink a little of this—if it is only a drop: Your emotions quite terrify me."

Mary

Mary took the glaſs, but her hands trembled ſo that ſhe could not hold it.

"I beg," ſaid ſhe, "I may be allowed to withdraw for a few moments; I will return in a quarter of an hour"

"Let me ſupport you," ſaid Lord St. Albans; and without waiting for Lady Caroline's permiſſion, he put one arm round her waiſt, and almoſt carrying her, he conducted her to her chamber.

"How your apprehenſions torture me," ſaid he, "beloved creature, have more reliance upon my generoſity."

"And your compaſſion, my Lord," ſaid ſhe.

"Forget that word, and pardon me for having uſed it," ſaid he "it is I that am at your mercy, and not you at mine."

"So it appears," returned Mary, "from my preſent diſtreſs, and your generous efforts to relieve it."

"My efforts are more generous than you will now allow," ſaid Lord St. Albans, "but no doubt you will in future do me more juſtice. I again repeat, it is I alone who can reſcue you from the effects of ſuch unfeelingneſs as I never ſaw equalled."

"Except in your own boſom," cried Mary. "To Heaven alone, I ſee I can appeal."

"I will wait upon you in half an hour," ſaid Lord St. Albans, "and reconduct you to the company. Lady Caroline will not permit a longer abſence. And can it be poſſible that ſuch tyranny ſhould not make you impatient to become your own miſtreſs."

"It does make me impatient, indeed," replied Mary, "pray leave me."

Lord St. Albans withdrew; and inſtantly Agnes came from Lady Caroline's cloſet.

"Who would have thought I ſhould have had ſuch a happy opportunity, madam?" ſaid ſhe, "I have ſeen Mr. Challoner; he has

has charged me with this for you."—— Giving her a letter.

Mary impatiently broke the ſeal, and read theſe words:

" Come to my arms, beſt beloved, and
" moſt excellent of human beings; talk not
" of diſgrace and poverty, rich as you are in
" every charm, in every virtue. Our dear
" Mr. Ellis bleſſes our intentions; his houſe
" is open to us until our mutual induſtry
" can provide us with another. Our
" vicinity to Scotland, will make it eaſy to
" elude all purſuit. Once my wife, what
" ſhall we have to fear? Agnes has already
" ſhewn me a garden door from whence I
" can ſafely receive you, and ſhe promiſes to
" manage your eſcape from the houſe:
" appoint the hour; let it not be a diſtant
" one; on my part all things will be ready;
" I make no proteſtations—to your know-
" ledge of my heart I appeal—to that heart
" which beats but for you, and which

"assures me, that if the fondest love can "recompense you for the sacrifice of rank "and riches, you shall never regret the "happiness you bestow."

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Mary was thrown into an universal trembling on reading this letter; but the present was no time for hesitation, or to discuss the propriety of the step she was about to take. It seemed as if the opportune arrival of William, was the very intervention she had demanded of providence;—she wrote immediately these words:

"There is not a moment to lose; to-"morrow night, when the clock has struck "one, I will be at the garden door, if "possible; if I do not come, you must "conclude that my fate is determined; but "whatever that fate shall be, my heart, "while it continues to beat, will beat for "you."

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Giving

Giving this letter to Agnes, " I have here," ſaid ſhe, " promiſed to meet Mr. Challoner, at the garden door to-morrow night, at one o'clock; but how is it poſſible I ſhould get out of this room, and out of the houſe? and if I could, how could I open the garden door?"

" There is nothing holds you in this room, madam," ſaid Agnes, " but this ſlight lock, which in cleaning, to-morrow morning, I can eaſily ſpoil in ſuch a manner as to prevent it being faſtened until it has been mended: the door which goes from the little hall to the garden, is only faſtened with a bolt, which nothing can be eaſier than to draw back: Mr. Challoner himſelf will have a key with which to open the garden door, and you have only to give three blows with a ſtick, which will be anſwered in the ſame manner, by Mr. Challoner, and the door will be immediately opened."

" I am whoolly unfit for ſuch an enterpriſe," ſaid Mary, " I tremble already,

 and

and doubt whether after all, I ſhall have courage to go through with my part of it."

If," ſaid Agnes, " it will give you any ſatisfaction, madam, I will accompany you; I wiſh only to ſerve you, and think of nothing elſe."

" No," ſaid Mary, " if I go, I will go alone; I will involve no body in ſuch a hazard but myſelf. Take then this letter; and take with it my warmeſt thanks for your faithful attachment; if ever it is in my power to reward you, you ſhall be made ſenſible that I am incapable of forgetting it."

Agnes took the letter, with reiterated aſſurances of fidelity, and Mary repaired to the dining room, to prevent the return of Lord St. Albans to her apartment, and to prevent the poſſibility of any one finding her with Agnes.

The remainder of the day, the ſucceeding night, and the following day, were paſſed, by Mary, in the greateſt agitation of mind, doubtful

doubtful of the rectitude of the ſtep ſhe was about to take, ſhe could hardly admit the neceſſity of it as an excuſe. Aſhamed of the appearance that in a few hours ſhe ſhould make in the eyes of all who looked upon her, ſhe was incapable of a moment's reſt, and heedleſs of all around her, ſhe thought only of what paſſed in her boſom.

Some few words however, that ſhe overheard, convinced her that her marriage with Lord St. Albans was meant to be ſpeedily compleated, and if ſhe ſhrunk back one moment from the means ſhe had meditated to avoid it, ſhe trembled the next leſt thoſe means ſhould be applied too late.

At length the appointed evening came; as uſual Lady Caroline accompanied her to her room, and as uſual attempted to lock the door: She found the lock ſpoilt; railed, and ſcolded, threatened to turn Agnes away the next morning, and was at length obliged to leave the door inſecure, and to withdraw

to

to her own apartment; which ſhe did, aſſuring Mary it ſhould be double faſtened the next day.

Mary remained oppreſſed with terror, and even ſometimes a faint doubt whether ſhe ſhould ſtill purſue her deſign, darted acroſs her mind. Yet as ſhe doubted, ſhe collected a little linen, and a few other articles, and proceeded to making them into a parcel, liſtening every moment to the ſounds that iſſued from Lady Caroline's apartment. Theſe died away by degrees; all became quiet, and Mary ſat almoſt breathleſs, with her eyes fixed on the door, waiting for the appointed hour.

The clock at length ſtruck one; an univerſal ſtillneſs prevailed over the houſe. Mary, yielding to an almoſt involuntary impulſe, opened the door of her chamber with a cautious movement of the lock, and with her little bundle in her hand, and ſcarcely daring to breathe, ſhe deſcended the

ſtairs

ſtairs with the light ſtep of an ærial being. The palpitation of her heart communicated itſelf to every limb, and her hands trembled ſo much that it was with difficulty ſhe drew back the bolt which ſecured the door that led from the hall into the garden.

Nor was it alone the fear of detection that agitated her; her mind revolted from the idea of becoming a runaway; it was alike contrary to her delicacy, and her principles. Decided in her opinion, that ſhe had a right to give herſelf to William, and that ſhe ought not to give herſelf to any other, it had been equally her wiſh, and the fixed purpoſe of her mind, to maintain her juſt negative, until ſhe had attained the age of twenty-one, and then avowedly and publicly to have beſtowed herſelf upon the only man to whom her heart and her conſcience told her that ſhe ought to become a wife. But conſcious of her inability to reſiſt the violence with which ſhe plainly ſaw that ſhe

was threatened, ſhe felt that her ſafety could only be ſecured by avoiding the conteſt.

She thought herſelf compelled to the ſtep ſhe was taking. " I have no choice," repeated ſhe a thouſand times, as ſhe traverſed the garden, " concealment and diſgrace muſt attend an action in which I ought to glory in the face of the whole world. Dear William! how often have I ſaid, that we would not come together in circumſtances like the preſent. But I have no choice!" repeated ſhe, " we will work the harder for it, and ſtill be independent of the kindneſs or unkindneſs of others."

She made the appointed ſignal;—it was anſwered from without.

" Yes," ſaid ſhe, as the door of the garden gave way in her hand, " we will be independent. Dear William, I will make the beſt of wives," added ſhe, throwing herſelf

herſelf into the arms—not of William—but of her father.

"And the moſt culpable of daughters," cried Sir James.

Mary ſhrieked and ſtruggled.

"Reſiſtence is vain," ſaid Sir James, as he claſped her to his breaſt, rather with the graſp of the moſt ferocious animal, than with the embrace of a parent, "you are caught, and ſhall receive the puniſhment due to your fault. Here, Robert, aſſiſt me in carrying this rebel to the houſe."

"It needs not Sir," ſaid Mary, recovering her ſtrength of mind, "I attend you without force wherever you chuſe I ſhall go."

"You ſhall go," returned Sir James, "where you will have leiſure to reflect upon the wickedneſs you have meditated; and cauſe given you to repent it."

So

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. * THE TANJORE

So ſaying, he rudely drew one of her arms under his, and draging her along, rather than ſuffering her to walk, returned with her to the houſe. When there, he conducted her to her chamber, and having firſt made faſt the ſhutter which cloſed up the only window that gave light to this diſmal apartment, he retired, leaving her in total darkneſs, and threatening her with ſtill greater ſeverities the next morning. She judged, by the noiſe that ſhe heard for ſome time on the outſide of the door, that ſome means were found to ſecure it from without, and trying the door that led through the cloſet, to Lady Caroline's room, ſhe found that alſo faſt.

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## CHAP. III.

MARY loſt all ſenſe of the evils ſhe experienced, and of thoſe with which ſhe was threatened, in her apprehenſion, for William.

That they had been betrayed, ſhe could not doubt, but by whom, and with what circumſtances the diſcovery had been made, and what had been the conſequences of it to him, was what ſhe could only conjecture, and every conjecture ſhe could form, ſerved but to torment her the more. She was unwilling

unwilling to ſuſpect Agnes, yet knew not where elſe to fix her ſuſpicion; and as ſhe could not doubt but that the reſentment of Sir James, and Lord St. Albans would know no bounds, ſhe ſuffered the greateſt tortures from reflecting on thoſe evils, which her lively imagination repreſented to her, as being now fallen upon William.

Such a night as ſhe paſſed under theſe circumſtances, could only be envied by the criminal who believed that the next ſun would conduct him to a painful, and ignominious death; and Mary, in the bitterneſs of her apprehenſion and deſpair, would perhaps willingly have exchanged her fate for his, with the exception only of his guilt.

A faint ray, which darted through a crack in the ſhutter, at length told her, that to all but her, this dreadful night had had a period: But darkneſs and miſery ſtill continued to ſurround her: The hours however moved on, and at length, the door from

Lady

Lady Caroline's apartment opening, ſhe ſaw her woman enter with her breakfaſt and a candle; ſhe placed them both on a table before her, and with a tone of compaſſion, entreating her to eat, told her ſhe muſt remove the light as ſoon as ſhe had finiſhed her meal.

Mary had yet ſhed no tears; but ſhe now burſt into a flood of weeping, and putting the breakfaſt from her—

"I cannot eat," ſaid ſhe, "I cannot eat, but if you know what compaſſion is, tell me, I conjure you tell me, what is become of that unfortunate young man, who was to have met me laſt night at the garden door?"

"Indeed, Madam," returned the woman, "I know very little about the matter; but I heard Robert ſay that he deſerved to be a Lord, he knew ſo well how to behave, and that both Sir James, and Lord St. Albans looked quite aſhamed; and as to any of the ſervants, I am ſure they would not have touched

touched a hair of his head; they all love you too well, Madam."

"But," cried Mary, her ſpirits reviving, "did he eſcape? Is he well?"—

"Eſcape!" ſaid the woman, "why, Madam, by what I can underſtand, no body tried to moleſt him. Sir James threatened him with I don't know what; but he talked to him about laws, and liberty, and things that I don't underſtand; and then Lord St. Albans ſaid, they had better let the fellow go. But Robert ſays, he thought my Lord looked more like a fellow by half, ſo ſneaking, and ſo aſhamed; and trying to take another mans' love from him. To be ſure it is not doing as he would be done by; and when Mr. Challoner turned to go away, he ſaid, (I am ſure Robert ſays he ſhall never forget it.) My Lord, you may make two virtuous and innocent perſons miſerable, but you cannot make yourſelf happy; and however you may think yourſelf above me, be aſſured I would not be Lord St. Albans for all the wealth in the

King's

King's dominions; and ſo he went away; and my Lord, after a little while, returned to the houſe, and left Sir James to wait for you, Madam."

"And do you know," ſaid Mary, "how Sir James was informed that I was likely to be there?"

"Why to be ſure, all through Agnes; and yet ſhe meant no harm neither; but ſomehow a letter, Madam, that ſhould have come to you at Rookby Park, fell into Mr. Wroughton's hands, and to be ſure Mr. Wroughton will do any thing to pleaſe Sir James, and to throw duſt in his eyes, as I believe there's reaſon good; and ſo then he watched Agnes, and yeſterday Sir James had her before him, and threatened to ſend her to jail, and make her beat hemp, and that ſhe ſhould be whipt, and I don't know what all; but Robert ſays they could have done no ſuch thing, only the poor girl was ſadly frightened, and ſo ſhe told all ſhe knew; and ſo Sir James ordered her to be turned out of the houſe directly; and my Lady

knew

knew nothing of all this, becaufe Sir James faid fhe would be in fuch a paffion, fhe would never keep the fecret long enough; for Sir James faid, he was determined quite to take you in the fact, Madam, and fo fhe was not told till all was over; and to be fure there was fine work then, fhe was for coming to chaftife you with her very own hand, but my Lord faid he would not fuffer it, and talked about love and honour, but to be fure he meant after all, only to have his own way. And fo, madam, this is all; and fo pray eat, for better days will come again, never fear."

Mary dipped a piece of dry toaft in the chocolate, faying, "I will do any thing you defire, Mrs. Davifon, after telling me fuch good news; but can you farther tell me how long I am to remain here, alone, and in the dark?"

"No, indeed, Madam, but I hope not very long, only my Lady fays you ought to live in a dungeon upon bread and water all your days."

"But

" But Sir James ſays, ſomething leſs will bring you to your ſenſes; and ſo I am ordered to wait upon you; and if I might give my advice, ſince, to be ſure you have no choice now of having Mr. Challoner, for I heard Sir James ſay, he would rather break your heart; let me tell my Lady that you have thought better of it, and that you are quite ready to marry my Lord, who, no doubt, is a ſweet handſome man, and much thought of by the ladies; and then you will come out in all your glory, and there will be no more locking up and keeping in the dark, and ſuch horrid things as ſhould not be tolerated in a chriſtian country."

" I thank you," ſaid Mary, " for your compaſſion, and for your advice, but I cannot do as you adviſe me. Perhaps my parents may revoke before they quite break my heart; and if they do not, the fault will be their's, not mine, and I ſhall be out of the way of any further misfortune."

" Dear Madam, you quite terrify me to hear you talk ſo;—why!—what!—ar'n't you afraid of death?"

" Not much," ſaid Mary, ſmiling, " and I would rather die a thouſand times than marry Lord St. Albans."

" Well, ſure, never was ſuch a pair of true lovers!—Why now, what if to divert you I was to tell you what once happened to myſelf."

" You muſt know, when I was young—not that I'm very old yet——"

Here Mary, who dreaded the continued loquaciouſneſs of her attendant, was relieved by hearing the angry voice of Lady Caroline call " Daviſon."—

" There's my Lady, as I'm alive," ſaid Mrs. Daviſon, " dear Madam, ſup up your chocolate, for I muſt carry every thing away; and when I bring you your dinner, I'll tell you the ſtory."

Lady Caroline again called, " Daviſon," and Mrs. Daviſon replying ſhe was coming, took up the handboard, and once more left Mary in darkneſs."

But

But ſhe left her with a mind ſo much relieved, that the very darkneſs ſeemed light, and her mind being now at eaſe, and ſhe being exhauſted by all ſhe had gone through, ſhe threw herſelf on her bed, and ſoon fell into a ſound and refreſhing ſleep.

Mrs. Daviſon returned at the dinner hour, but making a ſign that ſome body was in Lady Caroline's apartment, ſhe ſat down the dinner in ſilence, and retired. In about half an hour, ſhe returned, took away what remained, and withdrew without uttering a word. From all this Mary eaſily conceived that ſhe was thought of too communicative a diſpoſition to be truſted alone, and that there was ſome more confidential perſon within hearing. She returned regularly four times a day with food and refreſhments, but always on retiring took away the light, and left Mary to that laſſitude and wearineſs, the active always feel when compelled to be idle.

## CHAP IV.

MARY had now continued three days in folitude and darknefs, when on the fourth morning, Lady Caroline entering her chamber, ordered the fhutters of the window to be opened.

Lady Caroline looked on Mary with an air of cold feverity, and with a manner as if fhe was repeating a leffon that had been dictated to her, addreffed her in thefe terms:

"If

"If reflection can produce any solitary effects on a mind that has suffered such a total dereliction of every principle of propriety and decorum, as your's seems to have done, you have now had sufficient time to profit by a retrospective view of your own ill conduct, and the certain consequences that it must draw after it. You may now be tolerably well assured, that no weak paternal dotage dwells in the breast of your father and myself; you may see by the conduct we have held towards you, that we are resolved you shall be worthy of your birth and station in society, or that you shall be no daughter of ours. I would willingly flatter myself that such considerations have had their due weight, and that I now see you in a disposition of mind more suited to the claims your family has upon you than any you have hitherto manifested. Should this be the case, you will find both Sir James and myself capable of forgetting what is past, and of restoring you to that place in our affections, which, as a daughter you ought to hold;

hold; but if on the contrary, it is poſſible you can perſiſt in ſentiments which are equally a diſgrace to your rank, and a ſtain to your modeſty, you will alſo find that the career of chaſtiſement is but begun, and that we ſhall think it a leſs evil to behold you in your coffin, than that you ſhould live an eternal opprobrium to the name and honour of your fore fathers: the hour of deciſion is now come; make yourſelf fit to be ſeen; and in half an hour attend me in my dreſſing room."

Mary could ſcarcely with-hold her tears, on hearing a ſpeech ſo unfeelingly ſevere.

"Stay, Madam, ſtay," cried ſhe, as Lady Caroline turned to leave the room, "oh! do not quit me with a heart ſo determined upon my deſtruction, and ſo reſolute to entail everlaſting reproach upon yourſelf."

Lady

Lady Caroline looking on her with ineffable contempt, only replied—

" Be aſſured, child, your caution ſhall not be thrown away;" and then haſtily retired."

Mary felt her ſpirits ſtir within her at this laſt inſult, and wiping away the tears which had began to fall from her eyes—

" Oh! my dear dungeon," ſaid ſhe, looking round her, " how I love you!—your darkneſs, your ſolitude; what is there in the life to which I am invited, comparable to either?"

Mary having ſoon adjuſted her dreſs, proceeded with a ſteady ſtep, to the apartment of her tender parent, not unmoved with the apprehenſions of the ſcene ſhe had before her, although more than ever unſhaken in her reſolution, to avoid at every hazard, an union with Lord St. Albans, and to preſerve herſelf for happier times, and William.

She had expected to have found Sir James with Lady Caroline, but on the contrary, this Lady was alone. She received her daughter with ſomething of a ſofter aſpect from that with which ſhe had before greeted her.

"You have an indulgent father," ſaid ſhe, "indulgent, I ſhould ſuppoſe, beyond the poſſibility of your expectations. He has juſt left me, with an aſſurance that he will wave all reproaches, that he will conſider you as if nothing diſagreeable had happened, and that from this moment, you may if you pleaſe, be reſtored to his fondeſt affections."

Mary, doubtful upon what conditions ſuch indulgence was to be extended towards her, ſtood motionleſs and ſilent.

"Come," continued Lady Caroline, "I have a heart not leſs tender than your father's; you will find me as ready to forgive as he is. Let us ſeek him, and perfect ſo deſirable a reconciliation.

Mary

Mary hung back.

"But the conditions, madam?" ſaid ſhe.

"Upon conditions that I do not believe you will now refuſe," ſaid Lady Caroline.

"May I indeed believe ſo!" cried Mary: "Ah madam," continued ſhe, throwing herſelf at Lady Caroline's feet, "forgive me, that ever I thought you cruel; allow me only to preſerve my honour and my faith unviolated, and the world ſhall not ſhew a more humble, a more obedient, daughter than I will be."

Lady Caroline recoiled a few ſteps, and with a countenance that augured no good, muttered—"Honour and faith, indeed! riſe child, theſe romantic tricks quite overcome me; when will you learn to behave yourſelf like other people?"

Mary wanted no one to aſſiſt in raiſing her; ſhe ſprang from the ground light as

a cork, indignant, that ſhe had ſuffered herſelf to be deceived for a moment.

"Your father waits for us in the garden," ſaid Lady Caroline; "let us ſee that you are willing to deſerve the kindneſs he is diſpoſed to ſhew you."

With theſe words ſhe took hold of Mary's hand, and they deſcended together to the garden.

Mary was ſurpriſed not to ſee Sir James on their entrance, and more ſo to find that they moved ſtill farther and farther from the houſe, without his appearance.

Lady Caroline was ſilent, and Mary did not feel diſpoſed to make any inquiries; yet, on entering the walk which led to the chapel, ſhe involuntarily ſtopt, and ſaid, with a tone of affright, "Whither do you lead me, madam?"

"To

"To your father, I tell you," ſaid Lady Caroline; "he waits for us in this walk."

"This walk!" ſaid Mary; "this walk leads only to the chapel."

"And in the chapel you will meet your father.—We know your piety," added ſhe, with a ſneer, "and are willing that what promiſes you do make us, ſhall be made with all the ſolemnity that can make them binding in your eyes.

"There is no need of ſuch precaution," returned Mary, with reſentment in her tone. "Your Ladyſhip knows I hold a promiſe inviolable, let it be given when and where it will."

Lady Caroline felt the force of the retort, but ſeemed to reſtraint he indignation it raiſed; and before ſhe had time to frame a reply, ſuited to the part that ſhe was acting, they had reached the chapel door.

It opened—nor was Mary ſurpriſed.—However ſhe was ſhocked to behold, ſtanding

together, her father and Lord St. Albans, and the obſequious Mr. Williams.

She felt, however, her ſpirit riſe within her.—" They cannot marry me againſt my will, ſurely," ſaid ſhe to herſelf; " and of my will I am confident."

Sir James approached, and taking his daughter's hand:

" Lady Caroline has appriſed you of my indulgence, I preſume," ſaid he, " and how eaſily I have been induced, at the requeſt of Lord St. Albans, to change my reſolution, of deſerved and perpetual puniſhment, to forgiveneſs and reconciliation; and this upon terms that are in themſelves ſo happy for you, as to require, I ſhould ſuppoſe, no alternative to make them acceptable."

" My beloved creature," ſaid Lord St. Albans, taking Mary's other hand; " your chearful appearance here convinces me that you allow of our pleaded reaſon, and that you

you have abjured all paſt miſtakes, no more to be remembered by any of us; and thus," ſaid he, kiſſing her hand, "let me ſeal our happineſs, and my gratitude."

"Your generoſity, my Lord," ſaid Lady Caroline, "is beyond all example; come, ſir," to the chaplain, "begin your office, if you pleaſe."

All this had paſſed ſo rapidly that Mary had not time for reſiſtance or reply; but now haſtily withdrawing her hands both from her father and Lord St. Albans.

"Let there be no miſtake," ſaid ſhe; "What is this that I am required to do?"

"Is that a queſtion?" ſaid Sir James; "look upon Lord St. Albans as your future huſband; and do yourſelf the honour to receive him as ſuch upon this ſpot."

"And can you, ſir," ſaid Mary; "or can you madam, or you my lord, believe I ſhall be taken in by ſo ſhallow an artifice; I have *no power* to diſpoſe of myſelf to

Lord

Lord St. Albans.—My faith is plighted to another; I have given a convincing proof that I think it is, and to that other ſhall I hold my faith inviolable."

"Give *me* leave," ſaid the chaplain, "I apprehend the young lady's objections have been miſunderſtood; ſhe pleads not inclination, but conſcience; a plea," ſaid he, endeavouring to look profoundly grave, "that no one here would wiſh to gain-ſay; but her inexperience, and artleſſneſs, have been miſled by the wicked machinations of others. There is no doubt, madam," continued he, addreſſing himſelf to Mary, "but that you will hear with pleaſure, that no vow can be binding in your non-age; that your father has an undoubted right to abſolve you from every promiſe made during ſuch a period; that you are, by his will abſolved from any that you may have raſhly given; and that you are now at liberty to follow the dictates of your duty, and, no doubt,

doubt, thofe alfo of your heart, and to give yourfelf in marriage to this noble lord."

Mary had hitherto fcarcely looked upon this wife expounder of moral duties; but fhe now regarded him with fuch an air of difdain, and contempt, as plainly told him that her underftanding was not of a kind to be eafily duped.

"I think myfelf infinitely obliged to you, fir," faid fhe, fcornfully, "for the eafe that you have given to my confcience, as to the circumftance of any engagements I may be fuppofed to have entered into; and I fhall confider myfelf as ftill further beholden to you, if you will inform me, whether it confifts with your notions of moral rectitude, that I fhall give my hand to one man, while I frankly avow that my heart is another's."

"What trifling is here," faid Sir James, in a paffion; "Is it not clear as daylight, that a parent has a right to the obedience of his child? That fhe is a rebel and a reprobate that with-holds fuch obedience?

and that where ſhe will not yield it voluntarily, it is the parent's duty to exact it for her good ?"

"Certainly, nothing can be more clear," ſaid the chaplain; but it is beſt, if poſſible, to proceed by the way of argument; coercion ſhould only be reſorted to in caſe of neceſſity."

"It is the preſent caſe then," ſaid Mary, "for I will never ſanctify, by my conſent, treatment ſo unjuſt and abominable."

"I preſume, madam," ſaid the chaplain, "you are ſenſible of the ſtate in which your precious ſoul will ſtand, if defiled with the blot of filial diſobedience."

"My deareſt creature," ſaid Lord St. Albans, "let the ardour of my love, my vows of never-failing indulgence——."

"Spare your proteſtations, my Lord," ſaid Mary, "I can doubt of neither; but I mean not to try either your love or your indulgence, beyond the preſent hour; I am contented with the proof you have already given me of both."

"Begin

" Begin the ceremony, ſir," ſaid Sir James; " it is thy moſt ſacred duty to ſecure the happineſs and honour of this reprobate; her conſent is not neceſſary to the validity of the marriage.—Let me once ſee their hands joined, and every conſequence ſhall follow, my Lord, that you can deſire.—To you I leave the taſk of bending this ſtubborn will to the yoke of duty and of love."

" And if the pureſt paſſion—"

" Pray my Lord, no more—" interrupted Lady Caroline.—" Begin, ſir," to the chaplain, " we loſe time."

" The chaplain opened his book, he had even muttered a few words.—

" Forbear, ſir," ſaid Mary, " and profane not a ceremony meant as the holy contract of willing minds, and according hearts.—I am in your power, it is true; you may do with me what you will; you, ſir, may repeat a ſtring of empty inefficacious words; and you,

you, madam, may be aſſiſtant to the proſti-
tution of your daughter. I can reſiſt neither of you; but, after all you have mutually done to ruin the peace of my mind, I ſhall ſtill be *no wife*: Nor will any circumſtance, however degrading, induce me to acknowledge myſelf as ſuch to that——*nobleman*, I think you call him."

A general ſilence ſucceeded. Each looked on the other, while Mary kept her eyes ſteadily fixed on the ground, as if, after having thus entered her proteſt againſt the legality of the marriage, ſhe waited, in patient horror, the conſummation of her fate.

Lord St. Albans firſt broke the ſilent conſternation.

"Let me ſpeak a word with you, Sir James," ſaid he.—"Lady Caroline, be ſo good as to give us your company."

"I can fear no ſelf-reproach," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe turned from the altar to follow them

down

down the chapel.—" I have ſuffered too much from the effects of Diſobedience myſelf, not to be ſenſible that I ought to ſtrain every nerve to preſerve my daughter from the ſame fate."

" And I," ſaid the chaplain, in the deprecating tone of conſcious guilt, " know it to be one of my moſt ſacred duties to endeavour to reclaim a wandering child to the will of her parent.

Mary liſtened neither to the one nor the other; trembling, agitated, her limbs refuſed any longer to ſupport her. She ſunk gently upon a ſeat that was near her, and remained, in ſpite of all the pious blandiſhments of the chaplain, in a ſtate, that, while it had the appearance of profound meditation, in fact partook more of inſenſibility than thought.

The conference, upon which her deſtiny ſeemed to depend, was held by the worthy triumvirate, in a low voice, at the other end of

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASW

of the chapel. It lasted nearly half an hour, and being ended, Lord St. Albans approached Mary.

"You have little confidence either in my generosity or delicacy, I believe, Madam," said he; "but notwithstanding your ill opinion, I know myself not to be deficient in either.—Henceforward you will suffer no importunity on my account; and from this moment I relinquish a pursuit, which cannot be successful but at the expence of your happiness."

"Am I to believe you, my lord?" said Mary, raising her eyes to his face with a look of pleasure mingled with doubt.

"Yes, perverse girl," said Lady Caroline; "it is but too true.—Lord St. Albans will have nothing farther to do with you."

"Then receive my warmest acknowledgments, my lord," said Mary, "for putting an end to a persecution, that ought not, as much for your sake as my own, ever to have been began."

"For

"For its having been began," returned Lord St. Albans, "you, Madam, who ſo frankly avow the ſecrets of your heart, may perhaps eaſily find an excuſe in your own feelings."

"Oh! no," cried Mary; "I find nothing there that authoriſes the wiſh for an union of perſons, independant of hearts. But I mean not to reproach; I wiſh only to be grateful."

"It will beſt become you to be ſilent," ſaid Lady Caroline.—"Lord St. Albans, from a conſideration of his own happineſs, may withdraw his claim, but the demands of your parents are ſtill unſatisfied.—You will not, I hope, refuſe to return with me to the houſe?"

"I will refuſe you nothing, Madam," ſaid Mary, "that is in my power to grant."

And ſo ſaying, ſhe aroſe; and although ſcarcely able to move, followed Lady Caroline from the chapel to the garden. As ſhe paſſed

paſſed Lord St. Albans, he caught her hand for a moment, and preſſed it to his lips.

"Lovely creature!" ſaid he, "though you, Madam, will not admit of paſſion as an excuſe for the part I have acted, there is nobody who ſees you but will."

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

ON returning to the houſe, Lady Caroline ordered Mary to withdraw to her chamber, and to remain there till ſent for. She did not receive this ſummons until two hours later than the uſual dinner hour; and when ſhe appeared in the dining-room, ſhe found only Sir James and Lady Caroline.

The dinner paſſed in gloomy and angry ſilence; and if Mary had reaſon to rejoice in the departure of Lord St. Albans, ſhe had no

no cauſe to congratulate herſelf on the proſpect of family intercourſe that was before her.

She did not, however, even in wiſh, reſume her deſign of precipitating herſelf into the arms of William: Nothing but the dread of being immediately compelled to become the wife of ſome other, could, in her opinion, at all juſtify a tranſgreſſion of thoſe laws of delicacy and propriety which ſhe held ſo ſacred. She ſaw herſelf reſcued from this dread; ſhe conſidered herſelf as conqueror in the diſpute between herſelf and her parents; and believing ſhe had nothing farther to apprehend, than perhaps a rather increaſed portion of ill-humour and ſeverity, ſhe reſolved to wait patiently the iſſue of thoſe events, which were yet in the womb of time. Nor was ſhe without hopes, but that, by an aſſiduous endeavour from every act of duty and obligingneſs in her power, ſhe might ſoften the reſentment, and conciliate the affections of Sir James and Lady Caroline.—

But

But ſhe yet knew not the people with whom ſhe had to deal.

The thought, that, in theſe circumſtances, preſſed moſt painfully upon her mind, was the entire ignorance in which ſhe was, and in which ſhe would probably continue to be, of all that related to William, and her friends at Llamamon.

The extreme anxiety, that ſhe well knew they would feel for her fate, increaſed that which ſhe felt for them: But ſhe endeavoured to mitigate the pain of theſe reflections, by perſuading herſelf, that nothing would induce Lady Caroline long to continue buried in ſo diſtant and obſcure a part of the world; and ſhe was willing to hope, that on their return to a more general intercourſe, ſhe ſhould be able to find ſome means of informing William of the iſſue of her conteſt with her parents, and of her unſhaken reſolution to adhere to the conduct ſhe had formerly choſen.

With this hope, ſhe ſoothed the uneaſineſs of her mind, and endeavoured to turn all her thoughts and attention to the difficult taſk of pleaſing her companions, and ſoftening their hearts. But this, however, was the labour of the Danaides.

All the ſweetneſs of her manner, all the playful and innocent cheerfulneſs of her diſpoſition, were thrown away upon thoſe who could reliſh neither the one nor the other.

Sir James, making uſe of the preſent opportunity, to inſpect the affairs relative to his property in the part of the kingdom that he was now in, was ſeldom viſible to Mary, except at the hours of meals, and then he maintained either a ſevere ſilence, or uttered the moſt ill-humoured and indelicate ſarcaſms. Lady Caroline did not ſeem to experience one moment of good temper. The neceſſity, as ſhe thought it, of becoming the jailer of her daughter, in a place ſo deſtitute of all, that with her conſtituted the pleaſures

of

of life, gave a new poignancy to the rancour which ſhe felt towards her for her plebeian taſte, and her obſtinate diſobedience; yet the truth and dignity of Mary's character awed her, and ſhe hated her the more for a ſuperiority that ſhe could not but feel.

Hence ſhe ſought more to torment than to convince. And although her pride would not ſuffer her to entertain, for a moment, the thought of permitting one who was ſo nearly connected with herſelf, to become the wife of "a low-born wretch;" yet ſhe ſcarcely wiſhed that change in the ſentiments of Mary, which would have raiſed her to a rank and fortune ſuperior to her own. She ſpoke, therefore, more of puniſhment than reformation; and ſhe ſeemed to delight in repeating to Mary, that ſhe ſhould rue, for the reſt of her life, the reſiſtance ſhe had dared to make to her will.

Theſe threats conveyed no terror to Mary. She could not ſhape them into any form of

likelihood: and, in having efcaped from Lord St. Albans, fhe thought fhe had fecured to herfelf a certainty of being one day the wife of William; a fate, to the happinefs of which her imagination could not add a fingle circumftance.

But if fhe knew how to efcape from the dread of the future, all her ingenuity was unequal to the fhielding her from the effects of the prefent.

She was never fuffered to quit the prefence of Lady Caroline, fcarcely for an inftant;—and fhe was compelled to perfift, in an unremitted attention, to the various exercifes that Lady Caroline impofed upon her.

Dancing, mufic, drawing, and languages, each took their turn; but as Lady Caroline made the moft intolerant, and leaft edifying of inftructors, Mary was expofed to all the torments of inftruction, without being able

to reap any of its advantages. Lady Caroline did not always content herſelf with railing and threatening, but would frequently ſlap the hands of her ſcholar; telling her, that if ſhe did not know how to conduct herſelf as a woman, ſhe ought to be treated like a child.

Mary was too high ſpirited to betray the reſentment with which this treatment filled her breaſt. She bore all with perfect ſubmiſſion and meekneſs, conſidering herſelf as in that ſtate of nonage, where the child is bound to ſubmit to the parent in all things that do not militate againſt a higher duty. Not a word of remonſtrance, not a look of defiance, not a tear or complaint, eſcaped her. She wrapt herſelf up in an invincible ſufferance, taking comfort in the thought, that Lady Caroline herſelf muſt ſometime be tired of tormenting; or at leaſt ſhe felt aſſured, that no where but at Stanwick Caſtle would ſhe be able to find ſo much leiſure to torment.

A fortnight was thus paſſed away, and both theſe hopes ſeemed to be equally vain. Lady Caroline's vigour, in the career of puniſhment, ſeemed rather to increaſe than to diminiſh; and of removing from the place where they were, Mary heard not a word.

In this ſtate of ſuffering and hopeleſſneſs, Mary loſt both her appetite and ſpirits.—Her reſt forſook her; and had it continued much longer, the conſequence muſt have been a ſevere fit of illneſs.

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## CHAP. VI.

A CHANGE, however, now took place in Mary's ſituation, which, while it ſerved to preclude the hope of any future redreſs, brought ſuch a mitigation to her actual ſufferings, as gave her time to rally the forces of her mind, and to think of the means by which ſhe might eſcape from the evils that further threatened her.

She had obſerved that Lady Caroline had, for a day or two, left her ſomewhat more to herſelf than uſual; that ſhe ſeemed to be buſy

busy in some kind of preparation, and that there was a general air throughout the house, as if some change were going to take place. She could think of this change only as being an immediate removal from the castle, and she thought of it with a very sensible satisfaction. Worse off, she believed she could not be, go where she would; and change to the wretched is always a species of relief.

One evening, just as the day shut in, the door of the drawing-room opened, and the footman ushered in a tall, lank female personage, dressed in a travelling dress, long visaged, with high and sharp-cheek bones; over which scowled two fierce and sullen looking black eyes; of a dark complexion, and of an air and manner the least prepossessing imaginable. Mary shrunk back, from an impulse of terror. But what was her astonishment, on seeing Lady Caroline start from her seat, and taking hold of the hand of this amiable stranger, to hear her exclaim,

"My

"My dear Mrs. Macdowel, how I am charmed to ſee you. I thought you would never have come: the laſt three weeks have been an eternity; but now all my trouble is over."

"Oh! my dear Lady," returned Mrs. Macdowel, with a ſtrong twang of the Iriſh brogue, "you are the moſt obliging creature alive. I have longed to be with you, but had ſome little affairs to adjuſt with poor Mr. Macdowel's creditors. But all is now as it ſhould be, and here I am, at your ladyſhip's very devoted ſervice."

"Come hither, Mary," ſaid Lady Caroline:—"Here, Mr. Macdowel, this is your ward, and a very untoward one, I can aſſure you, you'll find her."

"She's a ſweet pretty creature though," replied Mrs. Macdowel; and I have no doubt but the young lady and I ſhall agree very well together, when we underſtand one another a little, and that ſhe knows it is my way to have my will in every thing."

Mary, who ſtood trembling before her, was ready to ſink at theſe words, which implied both the will and the power to have an abſolute rule over her.

"It is time," ſaid Sir James, in a grave and angry tone, "to inform this rebel fully of our pleaſure, and the inevitable conſequences that will follow any further reſiſtance to it. Pray ſit down, Mrs. Macdowel, I am ſincerely glad to ſee you; but I confeſs I ſhould not be leſs ſo, if your journey into this remote part of the kingdom ſhould be all the trouble we ſhould find it neceſſary to give you. You may imagine (continued he, turning to Mary) that we have a delight in puniſhing you; but you are miſtaken.—All the correction that you have hitherto received, has been with the hope of reforming you; and all the hardſhips that you are further to undergo will be directed to the ſame end. But in a conteſt between a parent and a child, who *ought* to conquer?—The parent ſurely; and we *will* conquer.—

 Or

Or if an obſtinacy, that knows no equal, makes that impoſſible, we will then puniſh you, not for your ſake, but for the ſake of example. Think not, therefore, that the trial is only who ſhall hold out longeſt; for if you once render us hopeleſs of ſucceſs, ſuch a torrent of vengeance will be poured on your head, as yet you dream not of. In conſideration of the unfortunate education you have received, and the ſtrange prejudices you have imbibed, we have been willing to extend the period of poſſible reformation very far indeed:—it is not yet over. Perhaps, however, already the methods that have been taken, have had the deſired effect. Perhaps you abjure your former errors.—If it is ſo, ſpeak;—and from this moment we are friends."

Mary, although trembling at a denunciation ſo dreadful, and at the manifeſtation of purpoſes ſo alarming, fixed her eyes ſtedfaſtly on the ground, and maintained a profound ſilence.

"Sir James," cried Lady Caroline, in a paſſion, "when will you have done hoping that this rebel may be reformed? Nothing that has the appearance of mildneſs will have any effect upon her; and Mrs. Macdowel may learn, from this inſtance, how ſhe ought to treat her."

"Mrs. Macdowel," returned Sir James, "has my authority to treat her with all the ſeverity ſhe may think neceſſary, if indeed ſhe is reſolved to provoke us to deliver her into her power; but it is nothing more than fair dealing, to advertize her of what ſhe may, in that caſe, expect, and of the means ſhe yet has of eſcaping ſuch conſequences of her diſobedience.—"You believe, perhaps," ſaid he, ſpeaking to Mary, "that Lord St. Albans has given up all thoughts of you; and well do you deſerve that he ſhould do ſo: but unworthy as you are of the tenderneſs and conſtancy of ſuch a paſſion, as he feels, I will not conceal from you, that he loves you as much as ever; that he ſtill wiſhes to call you his, and that he would think

himſelf the happieſt man in the world, if you would willingly become ſo. Againſt your conſent, he has proved that he would not receive your hand, even although given to him by myſelf. If he has conſented that we ſhall try what the force of our authority can do towards changing your mind, it has not been until he has proved how little was to be hoped from your generoſity, when more gently treated. But he laments, even more than you can do, the hardſhips you ſuffer;—and, if you will permit him, it will be the ſtudy of his whole life to recompenſe you for them.—Conſider, on the one hand you are offered rank, fortune, liberty, and indulgence: on the other, obſcurity, poverty, impriſonment, and ſeverity.—Chuſe between the olive branch and the rod. Reſolve to return with us to-morrow morning to town, there to become the wife of Lord St. Albans, or to ſtay here, *for life*, with Mrs. Macdowel, who has orders to make that life as uneaſy to you as poſſible."

Mary, clafping her hands together, raifed both them and her eyes to Heaven. She was filent: but it was not now that fhe *would* not fpeak, but that fhe *could* not.

"If, in refufing Lord St. Albans," continued Sir James, "you meant only to reject an individual perfon who was unpleafing to you, however unjuftified you would even *then* be, in withftanding my will, I fhould not proceed to fuch extremities in my difpleafure towards you. I would rather yield my choice to yours, if I could hope that choice would be made from amongft men of rank and fortune: but when I know, that in refufing the man I have chofen for you, you feek to gratify a predilection, which fhocks every moral feeling, and confounds every civil diftinction, I think myfelf juftified in apprifing you, that I would rather fee you dead, than the victim of fo fcandalous a propenfity. And folemnly do I declare, that if the methods I am now determined upon cannot reclaim you, they will not be the

the leſs perſevered in, as the only means to with-hold you from an action which would bring diſhonour upon your family, and diſgrace upon yourſelf.

"I will treat you as a maniac," continued he, "who, although incurable as to himſelf, muſt not the leſs ſubmit to chains and ſtripes, for the ſecurity of others."

At theſe words, ſo determined and dreadful, Mary's ſpirits (though not her reſolution) forſook her: ſhe ſunk from the chair on which ſhe was ſitting, and fell, ſenſeleſs, to the floor.

Returning to life, ſhe found all her tormentors equally buſy in endeavouring to reſtore her: but ſhe could not but obſerve, that it was in the face of Mrs. Macdowel that ſhe diſcovered the greateſt ſigns of compaſſion.

"Oh! kill me, kill me at once!" ſaid ſhe, the moment ſhe could ſpeak, "and do

not

not thus ſeek to terrify me into a compliance, that my reaſon and my heart equally abhor."

"You ſhall withdraw, my dear, ſaid Sir James, in a ſoftened accent; "your ſpirits are too much agitated at preſent, to enable you to determine upon any thing: take this night to conſider of your ſituation; and I doubt not but that I ſhall ſee you to-morrow morning, ready and willing to accompany us joyfully to town, and that we ſhall have nothing farther to do than to make our apologies to Mrs. Macdowel for the unneceſſary trouble we have given her."

"No, no, no,"—cried Mary.

"Withdraw, my dear, I beg of you," ſaid Sir James; "withdraw to your chamber; you ſcarcely know what you ſay. Lady Caroline will accompany you to your room, but ſhe will leave you there alone. At the ſupper hour ſhe will come to you again, and I doubt not but that ſhe will bring you to me, ſuch as I wiſh you to be, and ſuch as to be, can only ſecure your happineſs and your honour."

Mary

Mary withdrew to her room—and Lady Caroline ſaying, “ You ſee, child, things are come to an iſſue : ſtout as you think yourſelf, you will find we are ſtouter than you.—Submiſſion or impriſonment ;—I leave you to the choice.”

She ſhut the door, and left her.

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## CHAP. VII.

MARY, for ſome time, found it difficult to collect her ſcattered ſenſes, ſo as to be able to form any reaſoning upon her preſent circumſtances.

But as the miſt, that terror had raiſed, began to diſſipate, ſhe thought ſhe could clearly diſcern, that the road of honour was the road of happineſs.

In ſpite of all the aſſurances that were given her to the contrary, ſhe could not believe

believe that the horrors with which ſhe was threatened were meant to be perpetual.— She could conceive that there was no ſeverity to which ſhe would not be expoſed, while there remained a hope, that, by ſuch means, her conſtancy would be overcome; but ſhe thought, that if ſhe had reſolution ſufficient to perſevere to the end, ſhe muſt come off conqueror. The ſhutting her up for life, the delivering her over to be tormented by Mrs. Macdowel, ſeemed rather as ſcare-crows to frighten her into ſuch meaſures as were deſired, than as likely parts of any puniſhment her diſobedience would bring upon her. The days of enchanted caſtles, with dragons at the gates vomiting fire, were paſt. Her good ſenſe deſpiſed ſuch terrors, and ſhe wondered at her own weakneſs, that could, for a moment, have yielded to them.

" This," thought ſhe, " is but another act in the tragic-comedy, of which I am the unfortunate Heroine; and if I can but maintain my part, as well as my fellow actors

ſeem

ſeem diſpoſed to maintain theirs, there is no doubt but that we ſhall bring the matter to a happy iſſue."

Mary, then taking up a book that happened to lie upon her table, turned her thoughts, as much as ſhe could, from the ſtruggles and conteſts that ſhe ſaw before her; and without the ſlighteſt wavering, as to how ſhe ſhould act, quietly waited the return of Lady Caroline.

Lady Caroline at length appeared; but on ſeeing how calmly Mary was employed, ſtopt, for a moment, in ſilence.—Then ſaid, "How am I to conſtrue this aſtoniſhing compoſure? as a mark of ſubmiſſion? or as a hardneſs of mind, that knows no equal?"

"Dear Madam," ſaid Mary, "why ſhould it be either? Why ſhould I be diſcompoſed in circumſtances that, have to me nothing new in them? And why ſhould that be called hardneſs of mind, which is, in fact, only the effect of conſcious integrity?"

"What

"What am I to underſtand by theſe fine words?" ſaid Lady Caroline.—"Abſolute ſubmiſſion to the will of Sir James and myſelf? or impriſonment for life?"

"Certainly not ſubmiſſion, in the great point that is between us," ſaid Mary: "nor, my dear mother (added ſhe, taking her hand, and looking up in her face) nor—impriſonment either."

"Audacious!" ſaid Lady Caroline.—"Do you ſuppoſe we are as weak as you are wicked? and that, when we have failed to reform, we ſhall ſcruple to puniſh?"

"Indeed I do," ſaid Mary.—"I cannot ſuppoſe, for a moment, that you and my father would be guilty of *unproductive* cruelty."

"That will ſoon be ſeen," returned Lady Caroline, paſſionately.—"And ſince this is the diſpoſition you are in, pray ſtay where you are; you would add nothing to our pleaſure below."

And ſo ſaying, ſhe flounced out of the room.

Mary,

Mary, again left to herſelf, began to turn in her mind, the *poſſibility* of that impriſonment, and thoſe ſeverities with which ſhe was threatened, as the never-ending conſequences of her continued reſiſtance to the will of her parents.

" Should I," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, " have courage to ſupport them? Is there no weak part in my heart that would cling to liberty and indulgence, even at the expence of honeſty and faith, when the alternative is ſecluſion and chaſtiſement? Can it indeed be, that I am at this moment called upon to make the option? Muſt I, from this hour, forego all that my heart loves, my reaſon approves, or my principles ſanctify: or muſt I take this dreary apartment for the ſpace in which I ſhall be hence forward allowed to move? Can it be, that in the hearts of thoſe who call themſelves parents, there ſhould be no ſentiment of pity? no yielding ſubſtance that would melt at my diſtreſs? Can they be as inexorably cruel, as they are violently unjuſt?

unjuſt ? Well, if it were to be ſo (added ſhe, and her heart ſhrunk from the conſequence) muſt health, youth, and activity, be buried here, ſaid ſhe, looking round her.—Ah ! cried ſhe, thoſe ſcenes that hitherto have appeared of a mixed nature, now ſeem to take wholly a tragic hue. I am perhaps called upon for heroic reſolutions, and high-wrought deſigns, a kind of martyrdom. Dear William ! who would have thought, in the careleſs childhood days of our firſt affections, when they flowed, unruffled, in their natural bed of ſimplicity and truth, that they would ever have been ſo broken by the ſtorms of avarice, and the rocks of pride ? Well, added ſhe, in a ſprightlier tone, if it muſt be ſo, why cannot I be a heroine, and a martyr, as well as others ? Anna Bullen, with the axe at her throat, would claſp her neck with her hands, and laughing, comment upon its ſmallneſs. And we have read of virgins and matrons, who have minded ſwords and ſcalding lead no more than I mind pins and warm water. *I* will make myſelf, too, a

name

name in hiſtory, if there be occaſion. And after all, what martyrdom could be ſo ſevere as a marriage with the *worthy* Lord St. Albans? How eaſily will it be to perſuade myſelf *(and it is truth too)* that integrity can throw a luſtre over a dungeon, and that violated vows, and compelled compliances, would darken the reſplendency of a palace. Come, come (ſaid ſhe, encouraging herſelf) the path of honeſty is not ſo rugged as I had thought it; and if this terrific alternative is indeed given me, my option is made."

Theſe thoughts ſomewhat interrupted the courſe of Mary's ſtudies: the book lay, unheeded, by her ſide, and the hours ſlipt away without her having marked their progreſs, until Lady Caroline returned, at bed time, bringing with her a few biſcuits, and a glaſs of wine and water.

"I have brought your ſupper," ſaid ſhe; "and my indulgence prompts me to warn you

you againſt deceiving yourſelf, by any dependance upon the yielding temper of Sir James or myſelf. Lay not that flattering unction to your ſoul, that when you have provoked us to the uttermoſt, we ſhall ſtill forgive. Life or death is before you.—To-morrow morning you make the choice.—Good night."

And with theſe words, having, as uſual, ſecured the outer door, ſhe paſſed through the cloſet to her own apartment.

Mary thought not of going to bed, nor did ſleep come near her. It was therefore no diſturbance to her to be ſummoned early to Lady Caroline's apartment. Here ſhe found Lady Caroline already dreſſed, as for a journey, Sir James taking a kind of haſty breakfaſt, and Mrs. Macdowel buſy in adminiſtering to Lady Caroline that ſycophant praiſe, which was more grateful to her than any food.

"I have ſent for you," ſaid Sir James, addreſſing himſelf to Mary, "to know your deciſion: yet before you ſpeak, let me, if poſſible, do away that erroneous opinion of our indulgence, a criminal indulgence, however it would be, which, from Lady Caroline, I underſtand that you entertain; an opinion that may lead you to a determination which may be your ruin. Look around you.—Are you content, that, from this hour, theſe walls ſhall be your priſon, and that lady, pointing to Mrs. Macdowel, your jailereſs; or are you prepared to ſubmit your will to ours, and to do yourſelf the honour and happineſs of accepting Lord St. Albans as your huſband? Think, think before you ſpeak (cried he, interrupting what Mary was about to utter) for I call Heaven to witneſs, that you have no other alternative, and that the choice you now make will be irrevocable."

"Were you, my dear Sir," ſaid Mary, caſting herſelf at her father's feet, "to call an hundred Heavens to witneſs, I could not believe

believe you. What atteftation fhould convince me that a parent, that a *human creature*, could be fo deaf to the voice of humanity? that a moral agent fhould be fo carelefs of the immutable law of juftice? no, no, *you* will not be that parent, that human creature, that moral agent. I am, I muft be, a rebel to your will. You will punifh me, no doubt. But you will not punifh me in a manner that will make you ten times more guilty than myfelf."

"Rife," faid Sir James.—"Bold dictator as you are of the duties of others; conceited decider upon moral right and wrong! and why fhould the punifhment I threaten appear fo ftrange? fo impoffible? Are you fo ignorant, as not to know, that it is the very punifhment which the wife laws of France enable the offended parent to inflict upon the difobedient child?

"Were I in that well regulated country, I fhould not need to make my own caftle your prifon, nor to trouble this worthy gentlewoman to encumber herfelf with the care

of you.—There I ſhould find dungeons and jailers, eſtabliſhed by law, to vindicate the violated authority of a parent.—There my efforts to reclaim you from vice would not call my humanity in queſtion : there I ſhould not be arraigned as unjuſt, while I legally chaſtiſed a rebel."

"We are in England, not in France," ſaid Mary.—"We are before the throne of God, not debating the authenticity of a *lettre de cachet.*"

"Oh! would to God that we *were* in France," cried Lady Caroline.—"How eaſily would then this matter be decided."

"It will not be difficult to decide it in England," ſaid Sir James.—"But it is not only chaſtiſement I ſeek (cried he, turning to Mary) it is the prevention of thoſe ſtill greater enormities than any yet committed, and which I know you meditate, that is the object of my ſolicitude. And with this ſolicitude, what other puniſhment *can* I inflict, for your acknowledged diſobedience, that will not leave you at liberty to purſue your depraved

depraved imagination? And be aſſured (added he, taking up one of his piſtols that lay upon the table) I would rather lodge the contents of this in your body, than ſee you guilty of an action that would ſo pollute yourſelf, and fix ſo eternal a ſtain upon your family."

"Nor would the act be more unjuſt," returned Mary, "than the perpetual durance with which I am threatened. And if, indeed, you are reſolved upon my deſtruction one way, let it be the moſt ſpeedy: I am ready."

"Nonſenſe! romance!" ſaid Sir James.

"It is neither one nor the other," ſaid Lady Caroline.—"She knows very well there is no danger of you taking her at her word, or ſhe would not be ſo brave."

"Your Ladyſhip," ſaid Mary, "is indeed right. "I do *not* believe Sir James would ſhoot me through the head; though, in having ſo favourable an opinion of his principles, I am obliged to doubt his veracity."

 "Is

"Is this language from a child to a parent?" ſaid Lady Caroline.

"Alas!" cried Mary, weeping; "it is not in acts of neglect and cruelty, that children recognize their parents: reſtore the character to the name, and ſave me from the guilt of abhorring the hour when firſt I knew I was your child."

"Shew yourſelf my child, by your obedience," replied Sir James; "and I will ſhew myſelf your parent, by my indulgence."

"But," cried Mary, "the obedience that you require, on my part, precludes the poſſibility of indulgence on yours."

"What ſignifies ſtanding here, prating about indulgence and obedience," cried Lady Caroline.—"Will you marry Lord St. Albans, or be ſhut up for life?"

"Be ſhut up for life!" ſaid Mary.

"Patience," ſaid Sir James to Lady Caroline.—"I am willing (cried he, addreſſing himſelf to Mary) to go before you in the path of duty, and, by my indulgence, lead you, if poſſible, to obedience: though well you

you know, that is reverſing the natural order of things. I can, however, allow for the bravery of youth, when new to mortification, and can excuſe the irritation, in which your mind muſt, of neceſſity, be at preſent.—Let me ſee ever ſo little yielding; let me be told you will *endeavour* to conform to my wiſhes, and, inſtead of leaving you here, I will take you with me to town, and there attend the gradual change in your ſentiments, which, I muſt again repeat (for I cannot repeat it too often) can alone ſecure you from diſhonour, or give you happineſs."

"Oh!" cried Mary, redoubling her tears, "tempt me not from the path of integrity and truth, by a kindneſs, and a gentleneſs, that it ſeems almoſt criminal to reſiſt.—But what yielding *can* I ſhew, that would not involve the yielding of my honour? Nor can I promiſe to *endeavour* to conform my wiſhes to yours, without avowing, at the ſame time, an intention to corrupt my heart?"

"All this you deſerve, Sir James," cried Lady Caroline, paſſionately.—"I knew

 what

what good would come of parleying and temporiſing, from the firſt. Abſolute, unconditional obedience, from the child to the parent, in the matter of marriage, is what ought to be; and what ſhould have been, if I might have ruled, in this caſe."

"Your ladyſhip," ſaid Mary, "ought then to have extended your maternal cares to me, ſomewhat earlier than I was happy enough to engage them; or ſhould benignly have provided me with ſome Moravian preceptor, who might have counteracted the voice of nature, and of reaſon, and left me a mere machine, in the hands of avarice and ambition."

"Mary," ſaid Sir James, "is it thus you repay my offered indulgence?"

"Oh! my father," ſaid Mary—"*once* let me call you ſo; nor give me reaſon to think I mock myſelf, in doing ſo. My father, forgive me! Did you not aſk me *impoſſibilities*, you would ſoon be convinced it is no unworthy price I am willing to pay for your indulgence."

" Is it then impoſſible that you ſhould even *wiſh* to oblige me ?" ſaid Sir James.— Impoſſible that you ſhould *endeavour* to riſe ſuperior to a depraved fancy, which is a ſtain to the modeſty of your ſex ?"

" I know of no ſuch fancy," cried Mary. " The choice I have made would do honour to virtue herſelf : for it is virtue perſonified that I love ; and it is a choice that I *will not*—that I *cannot* forego."

" Then take the conſequences," ſaid Sir James.—" Mrs. Macdowel, receive your charge. Henceforward, ſhe is not to preſume to have a will diſtinct from yours ;— you are to rule her with the moſt abſolute power. All that you ſhall do, we ſhall approve.—From your will there will be no appeal."

" May I now retire ?" ſaid Mary.

" If you pleaſe : and if you think it proper to quit your parents for ever, with no further ceremony," ſaid Sir James.

" Alas !" cried Mary, " what can I ſay ? Heaven is my witneſs, how much I wiſh to

obey and love you. I would pray to that Heaven, to which I appeal, that your hearts might be ſoftened; but my pity would be derided; perhaps treated as being inſolent: yet the time may come, when only my forgiveneſs will be able to ſhed a balm over youı wounded ſpirits; and then it will be ſeen whether, indeed, I am the undutiful and worthleſs child I am repreſented to be."

"Be gone," ſaid Sir James.

"Let me never ſee your face again," ſaid Lady Caroline.—"Would to God that you had never been born!"

"Oh!" cried Mary, "how heartily do I join in that wiſh!"

And ſo ſaying, ſhe ruſhed into her own room; and quite overcome with the violence of her emotions, ſunk upon the bed, in an agony of grief.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

FROM this ſtate of ſelf-deſertion, Mary was firſt rouſed, by the entrance of Mrs. Macdowel.

"What's here to do, my young lady?" cried ſhe, as ſhe approached the bed.—"What are theſe tears and ſobs for, I trow? Are you breaking your heart, becauſe you have been taken at your word? Up, up, and be cheerful: you and I are to be companions; and I don't like melancholy faces, I can tell you."

Mary ſtarted from the bed; and bidding her angry paſſions be ſtill, ſhe replied meekly, " I ſhall endeavour, Madam, in all I *can*, to conform to your wiſhes."

" There, now," cried Mrs. Macdowel; " who ſaid we ſhould not be friends? My life to a halfpenny, but you'll be very fond of me before a week is gone over our heads."

" You ſhall neither find me ſullen nor provoking, I hope, Madam," returned Mary.—" But if I am not as gay as you could wiſh, I truſt you will not impute it to my diſlike to you, but to the juſt cauſe, which you know I have for grief."

" Ay, ay, poor thing: no doubt but that you think you have cauſe enough to mope; but remember, it is a cauſe of your own ſeeking. Look at you, and who would not think you all intelligence and underſtanding? Reflect on your conduct; and it cannot be diſputed, but that an idiot would have known how to have managed her cards better."

Mary,

Mary, who had no desire to debate her cause with a person of Mrs. Macdowel's appearance, made no reply to this observation; and Mrs. Macdowel, looking earnestly at her, said, "I do no not believe you have been in bed all night. I shall not allow of any such tricks for the future. I must keep your beauty fresh and fair for my lord, for his you'll be, after all: so come to breakfast, and afterwards you shall take off your clothes, and lie down for some hours."

Mary would have excused herself; but Mrs. Macdowel, darting a fierce look at her, said, "Am not I mistress here? and what will you get, by disobeying me?"

Mary, trembling, did as she was ordered. She eat and drank what was prescribed, and Mrs. Macdowel, seeing her docility, relaxed her brow, and chatted upon indifferent subjects.

Mary,

Mary had little ſpirits to reply; yet, unwilling to irritate ſo domineering a ſpirit, ſhe ſtrove to take a part in the converſation.

"Come, come," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, when breakfaſt was over, "I ſee you intend to be a good child; and if ſo, you may not, perhaps, find me ſo formidable a miſtreſs as you may expect. I ſhall not torment, for the pleaſure of tormenting; nor ſhall I fear (let me prove as agreeable a companion as I will) that you ſhould grow in love with your priſon."

Mary could not help ſmiling.

"Ah! I ſee you think I don't know how to be agreeable; but you are miſtaken; I am not without my charms, I can tell you: but how ſhould you reliſh them, with your ſpirits down to your heels? To bed, to bed, and ſleep; and when you awake, you will be better able to enjoy my converſation."

Mrs.

Mrs. Macdowel helped Mary off with her clothes; and, with great officiousness, endeavoured to do every thing that could contribute to her accommodation; then darkening the room, and drawing the curtains, she bade her go to sleep, and told her she would call her, when it was time to awake. So saying, she went out of the room, and locked the door after her.

In vain did Mary seek to obey her jaileress. Sleep visits not the wretched; and never had Mary been so wretched, as at this moment.

In all the hardships, that her opposition to her parents had hitherto brought upon her, the hope of preserving herself for William had been her support. In recounting her persecutions to him, she would have found a sufficient indemnification for them. But perpetual separation from all she loved; entire seclusion from society in general; to hold the common blessings of air and light, at

at the will of a despotic tyrant; with a conviction, that a redemption from these evils was only to be purchased by a sacrifice of her principles, and her honour, were reflections so grievous, as, for a time, to render vain all the consolation that her good sense and her integrity could offer.

In vain did she endeavour to recover the persuasion, which her reason had, at first, so strongly suggested, of the impossibility of any human being entailing upon another, such a fate as her parents seemed to have prepared for her. But when she reverted to the argument used by Sir James in its apology, that no otherways could they preserve her from an union with William; the sad conviction, that there were no sufferings that she could undergo, which would not appear light, when compared to a disgrace so indelible, and wide spreading, as, in the opinion of Sir James and Lady Caroline, such a marriage would involve them, left not a doubt

upon

upon her mind, that her releaſe from imprisonment, as far as it depended upon her parents, could only be purchaſed by her giving her hand to Lord St. Albans.

"I am undone," ſaid ſhe :—" William and I are ſeparated for ever.—I ſhall never go beyond theſe walls. Where ſhall I find patience, or reſolution to ſupport afflictions ſuch as theſe ? I repent not my choice ; yet I ſhrink from the conſequences."

A ſenſe of her own weakneſs completed her diſtreſs. For ſome time, ſhe yielded to the preſſure of it—then indignant with herſelf.

" Do I not deſerve," thought ſhe, " the evils I deplore ? are they not meant to correct my imbecility, and train me to greater fortitude ? Then, regaining, by degrees, her cheerfulneſs—I ſhould have made a pretty heroine indeed ! a very fine martyr, in truth !

Surely

Surely it muſt have been my cottage education, that has ſo polluted my noble blood; there is not a plebeian in the kingdom that could behave worſe than I do.

"Rouſe yourſelf, rouſe yourſelf, moſt illuſtrious Mary; conſider from whom you are deſcended; and let not your noble anceſtors, as they peep out of their marble tombs, bluſh for your degeneracy. And why ſhould I be hopeleſs? There is a Providence ſtill; and innocence is its care.—Ah! William, I may yet rejoin you.—It is *not* my fate (cried ſhe) firmly, to bloom, and die in this diſmal deſert. I ſhall be again tranſplanted to the flowing regions of Llamamon, and there, under your ſheltering care, and foſtered by your love, I ſhall put forth all my ſweets, and repay the kindneſs of the hand that guards me. So much for the future (added ſhe): for the preſent, it ſhall not be more wretched than it need be."

Thus did Mary endeavour to reaſon herſelf into reſolution and compoſure. Nor

was

was ſhe wholly unſucceſsful: yet, like the waves of the ocean after a ſtorm, her mind continued ſtill agitated; and even the force, which ſeemed to ſubdue her emotions, for ſome time ſerved to increaſe them.

Her bed was inexpreſſibly uneaſy to her; yet did ſhe not dare to riſe from it. Mrs. Macdowel's queſtion, "What will you get, by diſobeying me!" ſtill ſounded in her ears; and ſhe dreaded to provoke a ſpirit, which ſhe thought the moſt perfect ſubmiſſion could alone make bearable.

Sometimes burſting into involuntary and violent floods of tears; ſometimes ridiculing the cauſes of her misfortunes; ſometimes plunged into the depths of deſpair; and ſometimes ſoaring on the wings of hope, Mary paſſed ſeveral hours, before Mrs. Macdowel thought proper to return to her. When ſhe did, ſhe entered the room with a cautious ſtep, as if fearful ſhe might diſturb her.

"I am not aſleep," cried Mary.—"Pray give me leave to riſe."

"And have you not ſlept?" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.

"Indeed I could not," ſaid Mary, in a deprecating tone.

"Well, I ſhall not impoſe impoſſibilities," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.—"I am pleaſed with you for remaining in bed, whether you ſlept or not; ſuch a mark of your docility gives me good hopes of you. It will be eaſier to us both, that you ſhould obey me, from the *fear* of my power, than from feeling the *weight* of it."

Mary made no reply, but gratefully accepted (though ſhe wanted it not) Mrs. Macdowel's aſſiſtance, in riſing and dreſſing.

"Who would think," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, "that this ſoft boſom could contain a heart of ſtone? How beats the little rebel? Do you not begin to repent of your obſtinacy, my young lady?"

"Pray

"Pray do not force me to ſay what may offend you," replied Mary.—"I have not made the choice I have done, without due deliberation; and cannot pretend to the merit of a repentance that I do not feel."

"You pique yourſelf upon your ſincerity, I perceive," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.—"I ſhall match you there. I am ſincerity itſelf.—And to ſhew you that I am, I will tell you, in two words, it is for my intereſt that you ſhould never go from hence, while Sir James and Lady Caroline live.—No matter for what reaſons. Therefore you need not fear any teazings or torments on my part, to induce you to comply with the will of your parents: no, Heaven keep you in love with impriſonment, and your former ſwain.—But remember, that my heart will know no pity, in the infliction of any ſufferings that you may make neceſſary to prevent your eſcape. If you can content yourſelf with the range of theſe apartments, and a walk in the garden, when I think proper, I will endeavour to make your captivity as agreeable to you as

as the nature of things will admit; but if I once ſuſpect you of a deſign to effectuate your liberty, the darkeſt dungeon, the hardeſt fare, and the ſevereſt treatment, will be but a part of your chaſtiſement."

These words were accompanied by ſuch a look of ferocity, as made Mary tremble in every limb. And when ſhe looked on the maſculine form, and viewed the large and powerful hand of Mrs. Macdowel, ſhe felt the emotion which agitates the boſom of the lamb, when within the graſp of the lion.

"You need not be terrified," cried Mrs. Macdowel, ſeeing the effect that her words and manner has had upon her.—"I love dealing: ſo have openly told you what you may expect.—But it reſts with you, whether or not you will awake my ſleeping power; you may, if you will, be much more happy than you had any right to hope you ſhould be, when you made the preposterous choice you have done: but if you

will

will ſtruggle in the toils you have drawn round you, you muſt take the conſequence."

"You ſhall find, Madam," ſaid Mary, "that I will not give you any unneceſſary trouble."

"Why, that's well ſaid," returned Mrs. Macdowel:—"and now let us amuſe ourſelves. We will remove your drawings and books from below. I intend that you ſhall live wholly in Lady Caroline's dreſſing- oom. You ſhall ſleep in her bed-chamber.—I ſhall ſleep here. You like this arrangement; don't you?"

"In ſuch things as theſe," replied Mary, "I ſhall always like what you do."

"Why, you are a little angel," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, kiſſing her, while Mary involuntarily ſhrunk from her touch.—"What did they mean, by telling me that I ſhould find you ſaucy and obſtinate? and I don't know what? You are as gentle as a lamb. I ſee we ſhall be the beſt friends poſſible."

Mary ſaid ſhe hoped ſo.

But

But ſhe was careful not to loſe ſight of the terms on which their friendſhip was to be founded; and ſhe now ſaw how juſtly Mrs. Macdowel had expreſſed her own character, when ſhe had ſaid, "They ſhould agree very well, when the young lady knew that it was her way to have every thing done according to her liking."

CHAP.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

## CHAP. IX.

MARY and her companion now proceeded, in perfect amity, to make the arrangements that Mrs. Macdowel had propoſed; and even, in theſe firſt hours of their acquaintance, Mary found the pleaſure of having to do with one whom it was *poſſible* to pleaſe.—In comparing Lady Caroline with Mrs. Macdowel, ſhe acknowledged, that the moſt abſolute tyranny, provided only that the will was clearly expreſſed, was more tolerable than the irritating teazings of a half-indulgence, which knows not preciſely what will ſatisfy it.

"Already," thought Mary, "I have made one exchange for the better.—Who can ſay that it is not preliminary to others much more important?"

She had not, indeed, any reaſon to believe that Mrs. Macdowel's heart would be moved by compaſſion, or touched by affection;—but, with the ſingle ſacrifice of conſtant obedience, it was eaſy to keep her in the moſt cheerful good humour; and, in Mary's ſituation, this ſacrifice coſt little. It is true, ſhe found her new jailereſs coarſe in her manners, and illiterate and uninformed in her mind: but ſhe had a fund of natural good ſenſe, and a ſtore of amuſing anecdotes, which ſeemed to have been collected in the courſe of a very varied life, which rendered her converſation entertaining, and made her, upon the whole, a better companion for Mary, in the preſent ſtate of her mind, than a perſon of more refined talents, and ſofter feelings, would have been.

By

By not ſuffering any outward ſigns of melancholy, and by allowing Mary little time to brood over her diſcontents, ſhe prevented all habit of dejection, or complaint, from fixing upon her ſpirits, and proved a moſt effectual aid to the good ſenſe and natural cheerfulneſs of Mary, which equally prompted her to make the beſt of her preſent circumſtances. In the choice of her employments, ſhe was not controuled. Mrs. Macdowel had, indeed, no taſte for reading; but ſhe ſuffered Mary to read as much as ſhe pleaſed. She knew nothing of drawing;—but ſhe furniſhed Mary with whatever materials ſhe required.

Muſic ſhe declared herſelf fond of, and therefore would ſometimes make Mary play country dances to her for hours together.—With theſe various occupations, and a variety of needle-works, with the walks in the garden, and the hours of ſleeping and eating, Mary ſoon found that her time did not lie heavy on her hands; and ſhe was even often

 ſurpriſed

ſurpriſed with the eaſe of mind, which ſhe had attained.

" I ſhall be a heroine, in ſpite of myſelf," would ſhe ſometimes think. And perhaps heroiſm is an eaſier thing than we common mortals imagine, before we try. I believe it is nothing more than making the beſt of things; quietly ſubmitting to neceſſities, which, whether we are quiet or not, we muſt ſubmit to. Then I have been in the ſchool of heroiſm all my life time, without knowing it: for this is the very leſſon my dear mother and Mr. Ellis ever inculcated. Ah! could they but know how well I practiſe their leſſons!"

This thought drew a ſigh after it. The total ignorance in which ſhe was compelled to remain, as to the ſituation of thoſe whom ſhe ſo tenderly loved, with the anxiety ſhe was perſuaded they would ſuffer on her account, was a grief, for which all her reaſon, all her heroiſm, could find no mitigation.

It

It was this thought alone that prevented her from confeffing that her prefent fituation was, in fact, as eligible as any in which fhe could have been placed, during the period of her nonage. She was removed, at once, from the folicitation of real or pretended lovers, and from the tyranny and ill-humour of Sir James and Lady Caroline. She was fafe from the contagion of ill example, and from thofe fcenes of licentioufnefs, which had formerly fo much offended her; and fhe was in no danger of contracting habits of luxury or refinement, that might unfit her for the life of induftry and moderation, which fhe ftill hoped, and at times firmly believed, would fometimes be her lot.

She ftill could not perfuade herfelf, that even the callous hearts of Sir James and Lady Caroline, really meditated to confine her for life. She rather regarded her prefent reftraint as an experiment, than as a punifhment: and although fhe were aware,

 that,

that, if ſhe were miſtaken in theſe her favourable thoughts of her parents, that their power was ſuch, as might baffle all the vigilance and zeal with which, ſhe doubted not, but that ſhe ſhould be ſought by William—yet was ſhe ſenſible, that ſuch would be the difficulty, in ſuch a country as England, of withdrawing her wholly, and for ever, from the world, while ſhe continued a member of it; that ſhe thought ſhe made a juſt calculation, when ſhe aſſured herſelf, that, if ſhe were not to owe her deliverance to the tenderneſs of thoſe to whom ſhe owed her birth, yet that ſhe ſhould infallibly receive it from ſome accident, over which they had no controul:—and *that future*, which a youthful imagination always fills with ſcenes of delight, ſeemed to promiſe her, with a certainty that baniſhed dejection and excluded deſpair—a return to liberty, to friendſhip, and to love.

From ſome hints that Mrs. Macdowel had, on the firſt of their acquaintance, thrown out, Mary had been led to believe, that it would

would not be impoſſible to win her over to her cauſe; but ſhe was ſoon convinced that ſhe had miſtaken her. For while it appeared evidently, that ſhe ſought to conciliate her good will, and that nothing would be more unwelcome to this uncouth guardian of her's, than any change in her diſpoſition towards Lord St. Albans, there could, at the ſame time, remain no doubt, but that ſhe was reſolute to hold her in the ſtricteſt bondage; and that there were no extremities to which ſhe would not proceed, rather than hazard her eſcape. This was, in fact, the caſe.

Mrs. Macdowel had began life in one of the loweſt orders of it. She had received, from nature, a good underſtanding, and a bad heart. The one had remained wholly uncultivated, and the other uncorrected.— After having paſſed through various ſcenes of wickedneſs and diſtreſs, ſhe had become known to Lady Caroline, during her reſidence in India, in the capacity of a milliner.

Mrs. Macdowel's public apartments were diſtinguiſhed as the moſt noted receptacle of all that was faſhionable and elegant; and ſhe was ſuppoſed not to refuſe the conveniencies of privacy, to ſuch of her cuſtomers who might require it. Thus ſhe became as well known in the annals of intrigue as in thoſe of dreſs: and it was not wholly unſuſpected, but that Lady Caroline had received her aſſiſtance in both particulars.—Having, upon a particular occaſion, acted with too little diſcretion, ſhe had become too notorious to carry on her double trade any longer; and, to avoid the conſequences of her ill conduct, ſhe had been obliged to quit India.

As that which is got wickedly is generally ſpent idly, Mrs. Macdowel had retained little of her ill-gotten gains; and Lady Caroline had found her, on her return to England, in the extremeſt poverty.

By

By Lady Caroline's means, ſhe had again begun life, and might have gained a decent ſubſiſtence, could ſhe have perſuaded herſelf to have been honeſt. But deviating, once more, into ſome of her former mal-practices, ſhe had got into a ſcrape, for which ſhe was in hourly danger of a criminal proſecution.—She was in this ſituation, when Sir James and Lady Caroline determined upon ſhutting up Mary for life, rather than ſuffer her to become the wife of William.

Mrs. Macdowel had occurred to Lady Caroline as a perſon who was wholly devoted to her, and on whom ſhe could depend, to execute any orders, however harſh or oppreſſive. She therefore immediately applied to her; and Mrs. Macdowel accepted, with joy, an offer, that would at once ſecure her an ample proviſion, and procure her an aſylum from the vengeance of the violated laws of her country.

 She

She had found herſelf, however, in ſo awkward a ſituation, that it was with difficulty ſhe had been able to withdraw from London, without engaging more attention than was agreeable to the modeſty of her diſpoſition; and, from this circumſtance, had ariſen that delay in her arrival which had proved ſo irkſome to Lady Caroline.

Being once arrived at Stenwick Caſtle, ſhe wiſhed for nothing ſo much as to eſtabliſh herſelf permanently there. It was not, therefore, her deſign, by the rigour of her meaſures, to drive Mary into the arms of Lord St. Albans; but it highly concerned her, that ſhe ſhould keep her perſon ſafe. Even in purſuing this end, ſhe ſought to gain upon her good opinion; as ſhe looked forward to a time when the fortune of Sir James might devolve to Mary, and when, being no longer to be paid as her jailereſs, ſhe would have nothing to hope from her, except a reward for the gentleneſs with which ſhe had fulfilled that

that character. What made it eaſy to her to reconcile theſe oppoſite aims was, that her natural temper not being bad, ſhe felt no inclination to torment or controul, except when oppoſed or provoked.

Mary, who reſted all her hopes on the future, was careful not to render the preſent intolerable, by any uſeleſs bickerings with Mrs. Macdowel; and her natural good humour and gaiety inclining her both to pleaſe, and to be pleaſed, ſhe and Mrs. Macdowel paſſed their time together, apparently in mutual good-will.

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## CHAP. X.

THUS the days, the weeks, the months, paſſed on, without viciſſitude, and without variety.

Mrs. Macdowel never named either Lord St. Albans, Sir James, or Lady Caroline; and ſhe appeared to conſider the choice that had been made by Mary, as irrevocable;—and that, from its conſequences, it was not now poſſible that ſhe ſhould be relieved.

This

This conftant uniformity grew, however, extremely irkfome to Mary. It feemed to kill hope: and fhe even felt a defire to receive fome new application from her parents, were it only for the intereft fhe fhould find in replying to it.

Six months were now fully paft; and it appeared as if there were no link in the great chain of human connexion, by which *fhe* was united to the world. She felt completely infulated. The walls of her apartment—thofe of the garden, feemed, indeed, the boundaries of that fpace, beyond which fhe was never to pafs. Often, as fhe walked, would fhe caft her eye towards that door, which had once yielded to her hand, while it deceived her hopes. Often would fhe meafure the wall with her eye, and figh when fhe faw it was fo far beyond her power to afcend. Often would an irrefiftible melancholy fteal over her faculties; and, in fpite of all her former juft reafonings, and well-founded confidence,

confidence, her fortitude would give way, and hope would die within her.

One morning, the depreſſion of her mind having ſuſpended her power of ſelf-employment, ſhe remained, after breakfaſt, liſtleſs and inactive; her head reſting upon her hand, and her whole thoughts ſo abſorbed in wretchedneſs, that ſhe ſcarcely knew that ſhe exiſted.

Mrs. Macdowel, haſtily entering the room, rouſed her from her reverie.

"What, drooping ſtill?" ſaid ſhe:—"here's what will ſtir you, I warrant.—Well, ſure the kindneſs and love of ſome people are quite incomprehenſible.—Here, here—here's a letter from Sir James. It ſeems as if you might be a happy woman ſtill, and then, I hope, you won't forget how kind I have been to you."

Mary eagerly ſnatched the letter Mrs. Macdowel held out to her, and read, with an inexpreſſible tumult of thought, the following words:

" I may well ſay, that the loving kindneſs
" of a parent is never exhauſted. You have
" believed yourſelf forgotten, and we have
" never ceaſed to think of you. You have
" imagined that Lord St. Albans had for-
" ſaken you, and his heart retains no image
" but yours. What uſe are you inclined to
" make of this unbounded kindneſs, this
" unexampled conſtancy? Is the heroiſm
" of diſobedience paſt? and has the ſpeci-
" men you have had of impriſonment ſuf-
" ficed to convince you, that you could not
" ſupport it for life? In parting from you,
" ſix months ago, I meant not to have given
" you this opportunity of repairing the miſ-
" take you then made: but the tenderneſs
" of my own heart, and the unyielding paſ-
" ſion of Lord St. Albans, have determined
" me, once more, to call upon you, to have

" pity on yourſelf, and to entreat that you " will not juſtify, by farther diſobedience, " the rigour that you have already expe- " rienced, and make neceſſary that which " (in caſe of continued obſtinacy) awaits " you in future. You may, perhaps, doubt " my reſolution to enforce the puniſhment " I threaten. My preſent weakneſs may " authoriſe the doubt. But remember, " that indulgence abuſed turns to the moſt " inflexible vengeance; and that, if I can- " not ſubdue, I will, at leaſt, puniſh. I " would, however, willingly ſuppoſe, that " ſuch intimations are unneceſſary, and " that, having had time to recollect your- " ſelf, I ſhall owe your returning duty to the " free-will offering of your reaſon, and that " Lord St. Albans will be indebted for your " love, to the correction of your taſte.

" If I am happy enough not to be miſ- " taken in my hopes, you and Mrs. Mac- " dowel will ſet off immediately, on the re- " ceipt of this, for town, where you will be " received with all the fondneſs of parental

" affection,

"affection, and all the ardour of the moſt "violent love. If not—but I will not "proceed on that ſuppoſition—you know "the alternative; and aſſure yourſelf, it will "be as laſting as certain."

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Offers of enfranchiſement from a reſtraint that ſhe began to find ſo heavy, could ſcarcely have come, at any moment, when they would have been more likely to have met with acceptance from Mary, than the preſent.

Her heart throbbed; ſhe looked around her: the thought, for a moment, croſſed her mind, that if, by a ſeeming acquieſcence in the terms that were offered her, ſhe could return once again to the world, ſhe might find the means of perfecting her liberty, without violating her engagements, or outraging her feelings. The next—ſhe bluſhed crimſon deep, with the ſenſe of her own unworthineſs.

"Ah!

"Ah! traitor," ſaid ſhe.—"Mean-minded—double-dealing traitor; is it thus you would deſerve the happineſs you aſpire to? No, my beloved—my *ſincere* William—I will be yours, pure and true in thought and deed, as when firſt you loved me, or I will not be yours at all. What is it that I ſhrink from? the penalty that is annexed to honeſty? Whom is it that I doubt? Providence. Can I heſitate, an inſtant, what part to take?"

Mrs. Macdowel, who had eyed Mary with ſome ſolicitude during this ſhort debate, now regarded her with a look of mingled triumph and contempt:—for, while ſhe exulted in a reſolution that would confirm to her her captive, ſhe heartily deſpiſed the principles that led to it.

"What, my pretty dear," ſaid ſhe, with ſcorn in her accent, "have you courage to ſupport a continuation in this dreary manſion? Reſolution to dedicate yourſelf wholly

to a companion, whom, of late, I have not thought you took much delight in?"

"I have courage—I have resolution for any thing, rather than become the wife of a man, who makes bolts and bars the instruments of his courtship."

"And have you weighed the meaning of the words "*perpetual imprisonment?*" asked Mrs. Macdowel, with a sneering laugh.

Mary's spirit was, at this moment, high within her.

"And have you," said she, looking earnestly at Mrs. Macdowel—"have you weighed the consequence of being the agent in such a scene of wickedness? Can you believe, that *any* authority can justify you? or that there will not come a time, in which you will be called to a severe account?"

"Hey, day!" cried Mrs. Macdowel, "what new language is this? Do you threaten? Recollect, that you are now in my power for ever.

"For

"For ever! no, not for ever," ſaid Mary. "Death will ſet *me* free; and death will call upon *you*, to anſwer for your conduct towards me."

Mrs. Macdowel turned pale.—Her tongue faltered.

"Let us not talk of ſuch things," ſaid ſhe. "You and I are young: but there is a death that may ſet you free; and then, I am ſure, you will have reaſon to acknowledge I have always been your friend. Shall I ſpeak out? Sir James cannot be immortal. Hitherto you have had far from reaſon to complain of me. Nor ſhall you, in future, if you will engage, that, in caſe of your coming into poſſeſſion of your fortune, to ſecure to me ſuch a proviſion as will enable me to live at my eaſe, where I think fit: and then you may beſtow the remainder upon your favourite William."

"I

"I will promiſe nothing," cried Mary, indignantly:—"nor will I enter into engagements with one, who, to be true to me, muſt be falſe to others. Seek your reward from thoſe who will barter integrity for ſuch ſervices as you can render them. I will owe my preſervation to means, for which I need not bluſh."

"And dare you ſpeak thus?" cried Mrs. Macdowel.

"Away!" ſaid Mary.—"It is baſe to fear you."

"Do you not know I can trample you under my foot?" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.

"Do," cried Mary; "and end my miſeries at once."

"But why this violence?" cried Mrs. Macdowel.—"If you prefer impriſonment to a hope of liberty; if you like rigor better than gentleneſs, I ſhall not quarrel with your choice: to me it is nothing. I am ſure of the reward due to my trouble; and if I wiſh to receive it from your hands, rather than from

from another's, it is for your ſake—not for my own."

"I will look for liberty," ſaid Mary, "to that Power, who never forgets the innocent, and who, at his own time, will remember me."

"Charming piety!" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, with contempt.—"Here will I ſtake my watchfulneſs againſt your confidence, and we ſhall ſee which will prevail."

Mary turned, with abhorrence, from ſo impious an inſinuation; and, throwing herſelf upon a chair, began to contemplate the conſequences of the choice ſhe had made.

"You will pleaſe to write to Sir James," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, "to ſignify your will and pleaſure to him: and then, my young lady, I would have you prepare for a little puniſhment, that I ſhall think fit to inflict for your impertinence to me."

Mary

Mary disdained to reply; but, taking up her pen, wrote as follows:—

"In a choice that lies between vice and "virtue, happiness and misery, truth and "falsehood, I hope it will not offend a pa-"rent, if I prefer virtue, happiness, and "truth, to vice, misery, and falsehood.— "Reconcile your commands, oh! my fa-"ther, to those dear, and never to be aban-"doned interests, and you shall not find a "child more dutiful, than your ever de-"voted

"MARY SEABRIGHT."

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When Mary had done writing, Mrs. Macdowel rudely snatched the paper from her, and glancing her eye over it—"Very fine, very fine, indeed!" said she:—"they told me right, I see, that only sharp methods would do with you, and now they shall be tried. I'll teach you to despise my power of obliging you."

"What

" What will you do?" ſaid Mary, ſcornfully.

" What will I do?" cried Mrs. Macdowel, her eyes flaſhing fire.—" What will I do? Why, this I will do (ſaid ſhe, ſtriking her): and now, my ſtout Madam, if you would not have more of the ſame, riſe, and amuſe yourſelf the beſt way you may, in that room, until I ſee proper to allow you greater ſpace."

So ſaying, ſhe opened a door which went from the dreſſing-room, and which had hitherto been kept locked, and puſhing Mary violently within it, clapt it to; and Mary heard her double lock and bolt it.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XI.

THE ſuddenneſs with which Mrs. Macdowel's unuſual violence had paſſed, deprived Mary of all power of reſiſtance, and, for the inſtant, of all power of thought.—It was, on the part of Mrs. Macdowel, not ſo much a ſudden burſt of paſſion, as part of a haſtily conceived plan, to extort that by terror, which ſhe found ſhe could not obtain by gentleneſs;—by making Mary's captivity intolerable to her, ſhe flattered herſelf, ſhe ſhould be able to draw her into ſuch engagements, as would ſecure to herſelf the

 independence

independence, to which ſhe aſpired, let the event of the impriſonment be what it would. And even, if ſhe ſhould fail in this deſign, ſhe flattered herſelf, that the zeal, which her rigour towards Mary would diſplay, for the truſt repoſed in her, would ſecure and increaſe her reward from Sir James and Lady Caroline.

In the execution of this plan, ſhe had no oppoſition to fear, from the tenderneſs of her heart, or the delicacy of her conſcience;—and Mary had now no other mercy to expect, than that which the lamb may look for in the graſp of the lion.

Mary, who had fallen to the ground, from the force with which Mrs. Macdowel had puſhed her into the room, was no ſooner able to raiſe herſelf, than ſhe looked eagerly round her new priſon, impatient to ſee, in what reſpects, ſhe was worſe off than ſhe had hitherto been. She found ſhe was in a very ſpacious room, which ſeemed, formerly, to have

have been ufed for a library, and which ftill contained fome hundred of old volumes, arranged in crazy book-fhelves, on one fide of the room. Lady Caroline, who had no tafte for books, either new or old, had locked the door, by which the two rooms communicated; and Mrs. Macdowel had not unlocked it, becaufe, there being no furniture in the deferted library, fhe confidered it as a dreary place, that could, in no ways, add to the pleafure of the apartment, inhabited by herfelf and Mary. On her fudden determination to make the weight of her power to be felt, the fhutting Mary up in this room was the firft thought that had occurred to her;—and fhe had executed it, almoft as foon as fhe had conceived it. What further punifhment or torment fhe fhould inflict, fhe left to be decided by circumftances, or her own caprice. Mary, on looking round, faw there was not a chair, on which fhe could reft, or an object of employment, except the books, to fix her attention;—thefe were circumftances, which the agitation of her mind

ſcarcely allowed her to think or care about. She walked up to the books, without any deſign to examine into their contents; and it was rather from an involuntary impulſe, than any purpoſe of paſſing her time, that ſhe took one from the ſhelves. It preſented nothing to her eye that engaged her thoughts: ſhe put it again in its place, and took down another. This appeared equally unintereſting with the firſt. "What have I to do with books, in ſuch a moment as this," thought Mary: yet, in a hurried and diſcompoſed way, ſhe continued to take down, and put up ſeveral books.

"I will, at leaſt," ſaid ſhe, "ſee what that huge folio contains. If it ſhould be a Clelia, or an Amadis de Gaul, I might learn heroiſm or patience."

She put her hand to the book: ſhe found that it ſtuck: ſhe redoubled her efforts:—they appeared to be vain;—difficulty irritated her curioſity;—ſhe pulled, with all her might,

might; and, from the then ſtate of her mind, with ſomething more than her uſual ſtrength, the book gave way, and, with it, the ſhelf on it ſtood, giving way alſo, not only the folio in queſtion, but thoſe on each ſide of it; and thoſe above and below came tumbling, with the ſhelf, to the floor.

Mary was nearly involved in the general overthrow, being aſſailed on all ſides by the falling books; but ſtepping aſide, with her uſual nimbleneſs, ſhe eſcaped without any injury; and, after having taken a few moments to recover from her firſt aſtoniſhment, ſhe began to rectify the diſorder ſhe had occaſioned.

Her firſt care was, if poſſible, to replace the ſhelf; but ſhe found, that the pieces of wood, on which it had reſted, having become worm-eaten, and rotten by age, were entirely gone, and that, conſequently, there was no ſtay on which it could reſt. While ſhe was buſily conſidering how ſhe could ſupply this

want, her eye was caught by the appearance of fomething like the latch of a door in the wainfcot, againft which the book fhelves refted, and which now, from the chafm lately made, was expofed to view. She put her hand to the place; and though, from the ruftinefs of the iron, which nearly refembled the colour of the dark wood, her eye had been uncertain what it was; her touch immediately convinced her, that fhe had not been miftaken in her firft conjecture.

All thoughts, of reftoring order to the fhelves and books, were loft in a moment.—She endeavoured to raife the latch; it ftuck, for an inftant: but the next, yielding to the power fhe exerted, fhe lifted it up, and giving, at the fame time, a pufh, inftantly a door gave way, in her hand, which difcovered to her a light through a fmall room. Her heart rofe in her throat, with an emotion that almoft choaked her; and turning immediately fick, fhe was obliged to fit down on the ground, to recover herfelf.

Here,

Here, as ſhe looked eagerly on the aperture, the tumultuous hope of eſcape threw her, for ſome moments, into ſo univerſal an agitation, that ſhe was unable to hold a limb ſtill, or to command a thought. Tears, at length, came to her relief; and raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven, " Yes," ſaid ſhe, " Innocence is never forſaken. I have ſaid it: I have thought it always!"

With theſe words, ſpringing lightly from the ground, ſhe proceeded immediately to profit by the diſcovery ſhe had made.

By removing a few more books, ſhe eaſily made an opening, through which, with little difficulty, ſhe paſſed into the next room.

Here, as ſhe caſt her eyes eagerly round her, nothing appeared to encourage the hope, that ſhe had ſo lightly entertained.

The windows were narrow and high; the room was totally without furniture; and,

 from

from the circumſtance of there being no fire-place in it, ſhe concluded, that it had never been uſed otherways than as a cloſet to the library, and that there was no entrance to it, but that through which ſhe had paſſed.

"It is not then," cried ſhe, ſighing, "by this means that I am to regain my liberty.—But that I *ſhall* regain it (added ſhe, encouraging herſelf) is not the leſs ſure. My dear Mr. Ellis always told me, that the ways of men are not the ways of God."

As ſhe uttered theſe words, ſhe eſpied, in the darkeſt corner of the room, ſomething that ſhe thought was a door. She ſprung towards it. She was not miſtaken. She put her hand to the lock: it opened; and ſhe immediately found herſelf at the top of a pair of ſtairs, to which no light was communicated, but from the door, which ſhe had juſt opened. Doubting not, however, but that they led to ſome part of the houſe, to which

the

the vigilance of Mrs. Macdowel did not extend, ſhe heſitated not, although with caution, to deſcend.

The ſtairs, which were of ſtone, were narrow and winding: and when ſhe came to the bottom, ſhe found herſelf in total darkneſs. Perſuaded, notwithſtanding, that theſe ſtairs muſt lead to ſome outlet, ſhe felt about with her hands, and, by this means, ſoon diſcovered a bolt. She drew it back with all the force ſhe had; and the faſtening, being thus removed, the door burſt open of itſelf.

How inexpreſſible was the tranſport that ſeized the almoſt fainting Mary, when ſhe beheld, that this door, inſtead of communicating with any part of the houſe, opened into a kind of orchard, which, as far as ſhe could judge, muſt lie diſtant from the frequented parts of the building.

She ſtood, for a few minutes, conſidering the poſition of the rooms, from which ſhe

had deſcended; and comparing it with all that, during her reſidence in the caſtle, ſhe had been able to know of the relative ſituation of its different parts, ſhe was convinced that there could not have been any out-let more favourable to her eſcape, than that which ſhe had diſcovered.

Her firſt thought was immediate enfranchiſement, and to return to her priſon no more; but a moment's reflection convinced her, that ſuch an attempt muſt be ſucceſsleſs.

Were ſhe to eſcape now, it was certain, that her flight would be almoſt immediately diſcovered; and ſhe could not hope to find any one, near Stanwick Caſtle, who would protect her from Mrs. Macdowel's power.—Her wiſeſt part, ſhe felt to be, to content herſelf, for the preſent, with the diſcovery ſhe had made, and to take time and leiſure, to conſider in what manner ſhe ſhould benefit by it.

In

In making theſe reflections, ſhe cloſed, and bolted the outward door; re-aſcended the ſtairs, and again crept through to the aperture into the library.

When here, ſhe liſtened attentively, leſt Mrs. Macdowel ſhould be returned to the dreſſing-room; but hearing no noiſe, ſhe ſet herſelf haſtily, and earneſtly to work, to cloſe up the opening, and to reſtore all things to their uſual order.

She found means to replace the ſhelf, and ſo to diſpoſe of the books, as to conceal the damage ſhe had done:—at the ſame time, ſhe fixed all ſo looſely, that ſhe could, at any time, ſoon open herſelf again a paſſage thro' the concealed door.

This work over, ſhe began, impatiently, to wiſh for Mrs. Macdowel's return: for not now daring to return to rummaging the books, leſt ſhe ſhould deſtroy her newly-erected fabric, ſhe had nothing with which

to employ herſelf, nor even a place whereon to reſt in idleneſs. Her thoughts, however, were in all the tumult of activity: nor could ſhe remain ſtationary. She began to walk up and down the room with a quick pace, and ſoon loſt all ſenſe of where ſhe then was, in anticipating where ſhe ſhould now ſoon be.

To the practibility, or eligibility, of her eſcape, not one objection occurred.—— She thought not of her entire ignorance of the country, through which ſhe was to paſs; nor of the danger ſhe would be in, that every ſtep ſhe took might lead her back to her priſon, or throw her into the power of ſome perſon, who was ſent in purſuit of her. She adverted not to the diſtance which intervened between Merionethſhire, and the extremity of Cumberland: nor to her abſolute deſtitution of the means to provide herſelf with any one neceſſary or accommodation. Once beyond the caſtle walls, and ſhe believed ſhe ſhould have no more to wiſh. She knew how able her ſtrength had been,

been, in former days, to ſecond her will;—and ſhe thought not of the diminution it might have ſuffered, from the months of idleneſs and retirement ſhe had lately paſſed. She knew it would be eaſy, as Mrs. Macdowel's chamber was ſeparated from her's by a cloſet—after Mrs. Macdowel had ſeen her, as ſhe would imagine, ſafe for the night, to ariſe, dreſs herſelf, and make her way from the bed-chamber, without occaſioning any noiſe, that could awake Mrs. Macdowel.—And ſhe was ſenſible, that, when once out of the caſtle, many hours muſt elapſe, before ſhe would be miſſed. Theſe hours, ſhe thought, ſufficient, if well uſed, to place her beyond the poſſibility of being overtaken; and ſhe truſted, ſhe ſhould find expedients, from day to day, to ſupply the indiſpenſable wants of nature; and for any other, ſhe had not the leaſt attention.

Thus, happily, in the youthful and ardent mind of Mary, did hope, and an earneſt deſire for liberty, render her blind to every

consideration, that, in a cooler hour, her prudence and good sense would have suggested. Had she seen the dangers and difficulties, with which her attempt to escape must be attended, her courage must have failed, and she would rather have submitted to the evils, with which she was acquainted, than have hazarded those, which she would so justly have apprehended.

Lost, in delightful anticipation, the hours passed on unheeded, notwithstanding, the dreary uncomfortableness of her present situation: and it seemed to Mary, that but a moment had elapsed since Mrs. Macdowel's departure, when she again returned.

"Is that proud spirit of yours humbled?" cried she, as she entered; "and are you prepared to accept, as a favour, that I shall admit you to sit down to dinner with me?"

"I am very happy," said Mary, coldly; "and shall certainly be glad to sit down to dinner:

dinner: but I am indifferent whether I have a companion in my meal or not."

"You do not, then, deprecate my anger?" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel:——"but I'll teach you———"

"Pray ſpare yourſelf the trouble," interrupted Mary.—"I am very ſlow at learning to fear thoſe I deſpiſe: but I ſhall not give you any willing offence; and I ſee no impediment to our being upon civil terms. I am the ſame, in every reſpect, that I was, when you treated me with decency; and I think, it is as much for your ſake, as my own, that you ſhould *continue* to treat me ſo."

"You will allow me to judge of what is beſt for myſelf," replied Mrs. Macdowel, ſullenly, whoſe plans were ſomewhat diſcompoſed, by the cool diſdain with which Mary treated her.—"And I can promiſe you, that no conſideration for *you* will weigh in the oppoſite balance."

"I can eaſily believe it," returned Mary, diſdainfully ſmiling: "and I beg you will do with

with me as you please, with as little debate about the matter as poffible."

"You will pleafe to feat yourfelf at table, then," faid Mrs. Macdowel.—"Difpatch your meal as fpeedily as you can, and then prepare yourfelf to return to your prifon."

"Be it as you will," replied Mary, fitting down, and immediately beginning to help herfelf to the dinner before her.—"One room is the fame with me as another: and if it is your pleafure that I fhould fleep in that well furnifhed, and fully accommodated library, you fhall find me all obedience."

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CHAP.

## CHAP. XII.

MRS. MACDOWEL, diſappointed in not being able to raiſe any one angry paſſion in the boſom of Mary, took her place at the table, in ſullen ſilence, which ſhe ſeemed reſolved to maintain: but Mary, addreſſing her with her uſual obligingneſs, ſhewed her all her accuſtomed attentions; and even aſked her ſeveral queſtions, relative to how ſhe had paſſed the morning, without ſeeming to remember, the more than common reſtraint, that had been impoſed upon herſelf.

Mrs. Macdowel was not naturally ill-humoured, and loved talking as well as any female, ſince the days of mother Eve. Sullenneſs and ſilence were, therefore, painful to her: and, though no ſmall degree of reſentment glowed in her boſom againſt Mary, whom ſhe ſaw was likely to remain unduped, either by her coaxing, or her terrors, yet, thus wooed to converſation, ſhe yielded to her natural humour, and, relaxi[illegible] the rigidneſs of her brow, began to take her part in the diſcourſe.

"It is very ſurpriſing to me, my young lady," ſaid ſhe, "that you and I ſhould not be friends. You are frank; ſo am I. You are good-humoured; I am not much the reverſe. You love ſociety; I cannot live without it. I can pardon impertinence; and it does not appear that you bear malice.—Why, with all this ſimilitude of character, can we not be upon ſomething more than *civil* terms? Let us be upon friendly ones, and conſult our mutual intereſt."

"That

"That cannot be," returned Mary:—"becauſe we *have* no *mutual* intereſt. I have told you my mind, on that ſubject, before;—and whatever reſemblance, you may imagine, you ſee in our diſpoſitions, there are points, in which we ſo entirely differ, that any attempt, to bring us into cloſer contact, will but throw us at a greater diſtance from each other."

"You then deſpiſe my friendſhip, and do not dread my power?" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.

"I do not deſpiſe your *good will*," ſaid Mary: "but if you mean, by friendſhip, any league or engagement between us two, I tell you plainly, it is what can never take place; for you are not the perſon with whom I will have either."

"And my power?" aſked Mrs. Macdowel.

"I certainly do *not* dread it," replied Mary.—"I am aware of what you *may* do; and I believe, I have little to hope, from the reſtraint, that any tenderneſs of heart might put

put in your power. But I have been taught rather to despise wickedness, than to fear it; and I am not apt in learning new lessons."

"Do you imagine," cried Mrs. Macdowel, "that I cannot find a darker, damper, and more miserable prison, to consign you to, than the old library?"

"I have not thought about it," said Mary.—"But I am assured, you can confine me to *no* prison, longer than it is the will of Providence that I should be confined, and I have been accustomed to believe, that whatever it decrees is best."

"Providence, indeed!" said Mrs. Macdowel.—"And do you presume to think, child, that such an insignificant Miss, as you are, make a part in the schemes of Providence?"

"Oh!" cried Mary, "hope not to be safe under the cover of insignificancy.—"Not only *I*, but *you*, have an eye upon you: an eye that will find me out in the gloom of the deepest dungeon, and that can blast, by a look, all your gayest schemes of prosperity."

"I

"I have desired you before," said Mrs. Macdowel, earnestly, "not to talk of such things,—Besides, I have no intention of consigning you to any dungeon—nay, you should not even visit the doleful library again, if you would but speak me fair."

"I am very willing to be upon our former terms," said Mary; "but I can promise for nothing further."

"Well, then, we will pass this evening in the garden together," returned Mrs. Macdowel.—"It is the finest day we have had this year; and it is a shame to waste it in the house."

Mary's thoughts were too fully occupied with her projected escape, to be able to give much attention, either to Mrs. Macdowel's anger or indulgence. She persuaded herself, that, before many hours were elapsed, she should be beyond the reach of either;—and had not this been the case, she would equally have dis[illegible]ained to have deprecated the one, or sought the other.

It was now the latter end of May; and it happened, that the moon was at the full.— Mary refolved to be gone that very night.— She had no preparations to make;—what fmall quantity of linen fhe could carry with her, was to be all her ftock: and, however fhe might wifh for her dear ruffet brown jacket, as a drefs more fuited than any fhe poffeffed, to the character fhe now wifhed to appear in; yet fhe knew all fuch wifhes muft be vain, and that fhe fhould be obliged to content herfelf with the leaft fhewy garments that fhe could felect from her prefent wardrobe. She had not leifure even to fort out thefe: fhe was obliged, immediately after dinner, to accompany Mrs. Macdowel into the garden, where they paffed the whole afternoon, and did not return to the houfe until the hour of fupper.

Mary had no appetite to eat; nor did fhe advert to the many hours that would probably pafs, before fhe fhould again have victuals before her. She fat immerfed in thought, with

with her head reſting on her hand: and tho' ſhe ſtrove to appear with her uſual quickneſs of attentior, to all Mrs. Macdowel's wants, or attempts at converſation, it was evident that, the domeſtic deity was not at home.

"In truth," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel, when ſhe had eaten her ſupper, "you are a very bright companion, my young lady, this evening. I would lay a ſmall wager, that you already begin to repent of the fooliſh determination of the morning. What if you go to bed and dream of it? Some of your good angels, who are ſo watchful over oppreſſed innocence, may perhaps whiſper comfort, or teach you the miraculous doctrine, that impriſonment is no evil, and that it is a pleaſant thing for youth and beauty to be ſhut up from every eye that looks on them with delight."

"What did you ſay?" ſaid Mary, whoſe ear had juſt caught the laſt ſounds uttered by Mrs. Macdowel.

"What

"What did I ſay ?" repeated ſhe—marry, that one had better be aſleep in bed, than ſitting up by the ſide of ſo merry a companion as you are : ſo, with your good liking, I will juſt ſecure this door, and then, we will betake ourſelves to our repoſe."

Mary ſtarted, as if ſhe had felt a ſword's point at her boſom, when ſhe ſaw Mrs. Macdowel, as ſhe finiſhed theſe words, go towards the door of the library, with an intention to lock it. She gave up her hopes for loſt ; and had Mrs. Macdowel, at that moment, caſt her eye on her, the emotion of her countenance would have betrayed the tumult of her mind.

Pale and breathleſs, with her eye intently fixed on the important key, ſhe ſat a motionleſs image of deſpair : but it was the deſpair of a moment. Mrs. Macdowel turned the key in the lock ; but, inſtead of taking it away, ſaid, "I'll leave you the liberty of this room, which will lengthen your walk in a

wet

wet day; and, except you eat through the walls, you cannot get beyond it. But take care you don't provoke me to lock you up in it again."

All the blood in her body now ruſhed into Mary's face.

"Oh! Heavens," exclaimed ſhe.

"Hey day—what's the matter now?" ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.

"A ſudden pain in my heart," ſaid Mary; and ſhe ſaid true; for all within her ſeemed, at that moment, to undergo the moſt violent commotion.

"Come—to bed—to bed," ſaid Mrs. Macdowel.—"I ſhall have you ſick upon my hands, with your romantic notions of virtue and vice—of happineſs and miſery;—and I have no taſte for becoming a nurſe, I can tell you."

Mary moſt willingly obeyed this ſummons; and Mrs. Macdowel having, as uſual, ſeen her ſafely depoſited in bed, took away the candles, and left her.

## CHAP. XIII.

THE minutes that paſſed during the next half hour, ſeemed, to Mary, intolerably ſlow; but, when the clock, which ſtruck the quarters, announced that ſo much time was gone ſince Mrs. Macdowel had quitted the room, Mary ſtole ſoftly out of bed, and liſtening, for a moment, at the cloſet door, heard no noiſe that alarmed her. She then ventured gently to open it, and found her ears regaled with ſounds more delightful to her ſoul than the notes of the ſweeteſt muſic. Theſe were the loud and deep ſnorings of Mrs.

Mrs. Macdowel, which declared her as profoundly buried in forgetfulneſs as Mary could deſire.

With this encouragement, Mary again cloſed the door as quietly as poſſible, and proceeded, with all the expedition ſhe could make, to put on the clothes, which ſhe thought the beſt ſuited to her projected ſcheme. She was not long in completing her dreſs; and having put her watch into her pocket, which was the only trinket of value that ſhe poſſeſſed, and indeed the only barrier between her and abſolute want; for ſhe was wholly pennyleſs; and moving with the utmoſt caution, ſhe left the bed-chamber, paſſed through the dreſſing-room, and entered the library.

Hitherto all had ſucceeded to her wiſh; and ſhe proceeded, with a lightened heart, to remove the books and the ſhelf. But here, in ſpite of her greateſt care, from the trepidation ſhe was in, and the doubtful

light that the moon threw into the room, ſhe unfortunately took away one of the books, which ſupported ſeveral others, and their ſtay being gone, they all came tumbling to the ground together. The noiſe, ſhe thought, muſt infallibly awake Mrs. Macdowel, and ſhe gave herſelf up for loſt. She waited ſeveral minutes, in an agony of mind no words can expreſs: but finding that all was ſtill, ſhe took courage to reſume her work, and ſoon completed an opening ſufficiently large for ſo ſlender a perſon as hers, to creep through.

When ſhe found herſelf beyond the library, ſhe breathed more freely; and haſtening to the door which led to the ſtairs, ſhe opened it; and having deſcended with a light foot, and drawing back the bolt which held that which opened into the orchard, ſhe found herſelf, in a moment, at liberty.

Her heart beat ſo violently, that, for ſome inſtants, ſhe was unable to make any uſe of the

the freedom ſhe had gained; but her emotion a little ſubſiding, ſhe walked haſtily on, not knowing indeed where to go, and with no other idea, but to get as far as poſſible from the caſtle, before the return of day.

The moon ſhone, without a cloud to interrupt its brightneſs: the night was ſtill;—and, although ſomewhat cold, ſhe neither thought of, nor felt any inconvenience from the air.

She found ſome difficulty in ſurmounting the boundary of the orchard; but her adroitneſs and her zeal eaſily overcame it: and having got over the hedge, ſhe dropt down the bank, on the other ſide, into a narrow green lane.

She would have given any thing to have been told whether to have turned to her right hand or her left! But there was no friendly guide to point out her way, nor any circumſtance on which to form a choice.

"Let Providence direct me," ſaid ſhe, turning to the left hand; "and let me endeavour to be ſubmiſſive to whatever it may decree."

She walked on, cheered with the piety of her ſentiments, by the freſhneſs of the air, and by the ſenſe of liberty.

She had walked ſomething more than half an hour, when, through ſeveral windings and turnings of the lane, ſhe came out into a broad, and apparently well-travelled turnpike road.

Again there ſeemed a call upon her for an option.

"But," thought ſhe, "I have nothing whereon to ground a choice, and I will not loſe time in a fruitleſs deliberation."

Fear, however, at this moment ſeized her mind: ſhe was ſtruck with an inſtant conviction, to how much inſult and danger ſhe was

was expofed, fhould fhe be met alone, and wandering at that time of night, by any paf-fengers who were likely then to be abroad.

Under the influence of this confideration, fhe turned haftily into the fields, along which fhe continued to walk, keeping, as much as poffible, the high road in her view.

But now a crowd of melancholy thoughts and apprehenfions affailed her mind :—— thoughts and apprehenfions that had been hitherto loft, in the one overwhelming defire of efcape from imprifonment.

Now fhe firft reflected upon the formidable diftance that lay between her and every human being, whom fhe could call her friend. Now fhe adverted to the difficulty fhe might probably find, of converting the only property fhe had, into a fhape that would be ufeful to her. She ftarted at the fufpicions to which fuch an attempt might expofe her. She faw the impoffibility of telling fuch a

ſtory, conſiſtent with truth, as would ſeem to intitle her to the pity and aſſiſtance of any worthy perſon.—An appeal, from an authority ſo legitimate, and ſo undiſputed, as that of a parent over a child, to any other rule of action, ſhe could ſcarcely hope would be admitted by any one, where integrity and diſintereſtedneſs would make them ſafe protectors to herſelf.—And ſhe now, therefore, reflected, with the extremeſt bitterneſs of ſpirit, that ſhe knew not a ſingle creature in the whole creation to whom ſhe could apply for ſhelter, until ſhe could inform Eleanor and William of her eſcape.—Yet could ſhe not repent having attempted this eſcape ;—and ſhe continued to walk forwards, ſhe knew not whither—while, for ſome time, the tumult and agitation of her mind preſerved her from all ſenſe of fatigue, and took from her all feeling of the preſent, in apprehenſion for the future

But at length, after ſome hours walking, the very emotion of her mind, which had, for ſome

ſome time, rendered her inſenſible to fatigue, having, in fact, increaſed it, ſhe found herſelf, at the break of day (her ſtrength exhauſted by wearineſs and hunger, and her mind ſunk in deſpondency) by the ſide of a cottage. She felt that it was impoſſible for her to proceed a ſtep further.—What to do ſhe knew not.—Already ſhe thought herſelf again encloſed in the walls of the caſtle. The tears ſtood trembling in her eyes, and ſhe was ready to call on death, as to her deliverer.

Suddenly, however, rouſing herſelf, ſhe exclaimed, "What weakneſs is this? How ill do I ſecond the kindneſs of a liberating Providence? Aſſiſtance is perhaps now at hand; and I periſh, becauſe I have not courage to ſeek it."

As ſhe uttered theſe words, ſhe knocked gently at the door of the cottage. It was opened by a clean old woman, who civilly aſked her what ſhe wanted?

Mary ſcarcely knew what to reply: but the diſtreſs, ſtruggling in her countenance, ſpoke for her.

"You look tired," ſaid the old woman.—"Surely you cannot have come far this morning: but if you are weary, you may ſtep in, and reſt yourſelf a moment."

Mary thanked the welcome hoſpitality of her new friend with a flood of tears: for ſo exhauſted were the powers of her mind, by her fatigue and apprehenſions, that her ſpirits were quite ſunk; and ſhe had not, at that inſtant, fortitude either to ſuppreſs or conceal her emotion.

"I have travelled all night," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe ſunk into a chair; "and but for your goodneſs, I know not what would have become of me."

"Travelled all night!" exclaimed the old woman.—"And what buſineſs has a young

woman, like you, to be travelling all night, forſooth ?"

Mary was, for ſome moments, unable to anſwer ; but at length ſhe ſaid, " I am a very unfortunate creature.—I have been obliged to fly from parents, who would force me to be unjuſt and miſerable ; and all I wiſh is, to find the means of procuring an honeſt livelihood."

" You ſeem mighty fit for employment, indeed !" ſaid the old woman.—" Perhaps you are hungry, as well as tired ; and if ſo, if you can eat bread and milk, here is a meſs much at your ſervice."

Mary again earneſtly thanked her benefactreſs, and eagerly ſwallowed the milk, ſhe being almoſt dying with thirſt.

The old woman repleniſhed the bowl, and kindly urged her to eat ; and Mary, having ſatisfied her hunger, found herſelf refreſhed beyond her hopes.

"And now, pray," ſaid the old woman, looking her all over with a curious eye, "let me know who you are; where you came from; and where you are going?"

"I hope," ſaid Mary, with the air of ingenuous truth, which ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed her, "I hope that you will not think me ungrateful, if I do not anſwer your queſtions.—As to who I am, it would have been happy for me, had I never known it myſelf; and, in truth, I can ſcarcely tell you from whence I came, and ſtill leſs, whither I am going."

"Hey, day!" cried the old woman;—"what riddle me ree is this? A perſon who knows not who ſhe is, whence ſhe comes, and whither ſhe is going! Then, pray, Mrs. Ignorance, walk out of my houſe; I'll harbour no ſuch ſuſpicious perſons, I can tell you."

"I entreat of you," ſaid Mary, "to ſuffer me to remain here ſome little time longer: I am almoſt exhauſted with fatigue, and

know not what will become of me, if I muſt immediately renew my journey."

"And what will become of *me*, pray," returned the old woman, "if I ſuffer ſuch vagabonds and vagrants to find ſhelter under my roof? What will my young lady ſay to it, I wonder?"

"I am not ſo deſtitute as you may imagine," replied Mary, and pulling out her watch.—"Suffer me (added ſhe) to ſtay here a little longer, and I will give you this caſe, which I aſſure you is gold."

The old woman, on the ſight of the watch, ſtarted, as if, on gathering her bundle of ſticks, ſhe had laid hold of a ſerpent. It confirmed every ſuſpicion, which ſhe had before entertained, of the honeſty of her gueſt: although, aſſuredly, if any one could look on the countenance of Mary, and ſuſpect her of fraud, the boaſted ſcience of Lavater muſt be vain; or there muſt be perſons, who not even his intelligence could enlighten.

"I

"I have that cafe! Mercy on me, what do you take me for?" exclaimed the old creature.—"Good Lord! why, I would not touch fuch bafe-gotten goods for the world. Have not I promifed my young lady I will do no fuch things again? I fhould look to be hanged the next minute."

Mary, half fmiling, replied, "You may touch it very fafely. I give you my word, I came as honeftly by it, as you did by any thing in this houfe."

"Aye, aye," cried the old crone; "tell fuch tales to thofe who will believe them.—I underftand trap better. *You* come honeftly by a *gold* watch, indeed! Come, troop.—I could fancy I hear the conftable at the door this moment. Who knows but I may be taken up too? and then who fhall perfuade my young lady that I am innocent?"

"Let me prevail with you," faid Mary, her hands clafped together, and the tears running down her cheeks—"let me prevail upon you to give me fhelter for one fingle quarter

quarter of an hour! Were I the wicked perſon you ſuppoſe, what good would it do you, that I ſhould die of fatigue? And what harm can you ſuffer from me, while you remain here to watch me?"

"But what will my young lady ſay?" replied the old woman, a little ſoftened.—"She has always ſaid, "Joyce, be ſure you don't harbour wicked perſons any more."—And I have always ſaid, "No, to be ſure, my lady, I won't;—not I: and now to go to harbour *you*."

"Alas!" cried Mary, weeping bitterly, "I am no wicked perſon, but ſurely a moſt unfortunate one. Who is this young lady? Would not ſhe have compaſſion on me? Would not ſhe find me ſome employment, until I could write to my real friends?"

"Employment, indeed!" returned the old woman.—"What employment, Mrs. Nimblefingers, are you fit for, I wonder?—No, no, ſhe will give no encouragement to any ſuch perſons, I can tell you."

"I have been more uſed to honeſt labour than you may think," replied Mary; "and indeed you will have no cauſe to repent ſhewing me a little compaſſion."

"Well, to be ſure," ſaid the old woman, "you take on piteouſly; and I have been always famed for compaſſion.—Too eaſy—too eaſy.—It had like to have been my ruin, as I may ſay: and yet I cannot be cruel; ſo come what will, ſtep into that inner room; throw yourſelf on the bed, and ſleep for an hour, or ſo, and then go about your buſineſs: and as my young lady reads to me out of the Bible book, if you have ſtolen, ſteal no more."

Mary waited not to be urged a ſecond time; but haſtily expreſſing the ſenſe ſhe had of this kindneſs, ſhe quickly availed herſelf of the liberty that was given her; and throwing herſelf upon the bed, ſoon fell into a profound ſleep.

From this ſhe was awakened, by her fidgetting hoſteſs.

"Awake, awake," cried ſhe: "you have ſlept four hours inſtead of one.—You muſt ſtay no longer; my young lady will be here preſently, and I would not, for more than I can tell, that ſhe ſhould find you."

Mary ſtarted from the bed, and declared, with thanks, her readineſs to be gone: yet ſaid, "If you would ſuffer me to ſtay and ſee this young lady, how much ſhould I be obliged to you! Something tells me, that ſhe would be my friend; and ſurely nobody wants a friend more."

"I'll ſuffer no ſuch thing, indeed," ſaid the old woman.—"Be gone, be gone, if you would not have me turn you out."

"I will not return my obligations to you, by giving you that trouble," ſaid Mary.—"And pray take this (offering the watch caſe) as a mark of my gratitude."

"Mercy forbid!" replied the old woman. "I would not touch that pernicious watch for

for all I am worth : for you would as ſoon perſuade me that the moon's made of green cheeſe, as that you came honeſtly by it."

"Sometime, perhaps, you will know you have wronged me," ſaid Mary.—"But farewell ; and God bleſs you : I ſhall never ceaſe to remember, with gratitude, the ſervice you have rendered me."

So ſaying, ſhe turned to go away, when the old woman cried out, " Ah ! you have ſtayed too long already, as I'm a living woman : here comes my young lady ; now what will become of me ?"

As ſhe ſpoke, the cottage door opened, and, in the ſame inſtant, the eyes of the ſtranger met thoſe of Mary.

" Anna !—Mary !"—with mutual joy and aſtoniſhment, exclaimed both, as they ruſhed into each others arms.

" Is it poſſible ?"—and is it you ?—And what can have brought you here ?—were at firſt the only words that either could utter, while the old woman ſtood by, loſt in fear

and

and wonder, and already began to ſtammer out ſome faint apologies to Mary: but Mary, taking her by the hand, ſaid, "See here, my dear Anna, this good friend of mine. If it had not been for her, I know not what would have become of me: ſhe has ſheltered and fed me."

"Then, Joyce," ſaid Anna, "I'll give you a new gown this very day; for you have ſuccoured one of the perſons whom I love beſt in the world."

"God bleſs her ſweet face," ſaid the old woman.—"Who could help ſuccouring her, as you call it? I never was ſo taken with a creature in my life; and ſhe'll tell you I treated her like my own child, and all without fee or reward, I promiſe you."

Mary could not help ſmiling at the addreſs of veteran Joyce;—but aſſured her, ſhe ſhould never forget her kindneſs.

"You muſt now leave us alone," ſaid Anna.—"And be ſure," added Mary, "if any

any body inquires after me, you do not ſay I am here."

"Never you fear," returned Joyce, giving her a nod of intelligence, as ſhe went out of the cottage.—"If any of your buſy bodies and informers are about, I'll tell them I never ſet eyes on ſuch a young lady in all my born days."

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## CHAP. XIV.

MARY now communicated to her wondering and impatient friend all that had happened to her ſince they laſt parted; and Anna heard the tale with the trueſt and moſt tender

tender ſympathy. But compaſſion was all, that of herſelf, ſhe felt able to beſtow. She had not ſufficient addreſs, eaſily to find expedients to aſſiſt the diſtreſs, which, nevertheleſs, ſhe moſt ſincerely commiſerated :— nor if ſhe had had the addreſs, would ſhe have had the courage neceſſary to make uſe of the expedients.

"My dear Mary," ſaid ſhe, melting into tears; "how much do I pity you! And alas! what is it that I can do to aſſiſt you?"

"All I wiſh," returned Mary, "is ſome ſafe aſylum, where I may remain concealed, until I can hear from my dear mother, to whom I would write immediately, were there any place where I could ſafely wait her anſwer.,'

"But where is ſuch a place to be found?" ſaid Anna, with a tone of deſpondency.—"I dare not invite you home with me. My mother has heard your ſtory. She is aſtoniſhed that you ſhould refuſe Lord St. Albans, and thinks it very wrong that you

ſhould

ſhould perſiſt in your attachment to a perſon ſo much beneath you as William. Often is ſhe angry with me, when I attempt to take your part: and oh! how much do I wiſh, upon ſuch occaſions, that I could plead your cauſe, as I have heard you plead it yourſelf!"

"If this is the caſe, my dear Anna," returned Mary, "you ſhall not run any hazards upon my account I am not worſe off than before my meeting with you; and I will do now as I muſt have done then."

"Oh! no, no," cried Anna, "I *muſt* aſſiſt you. Would I could think how I might do ſo: but whatever you will ſuggeſt, I will endeavour to execute."

"Would it be poſſible that I ſhould remain concealed in this cottage?" ſaid Mary: and can this old woman be depended upon?"

"Yes, indeed, I believe ſhe may," returned Anna.—"My father and mother ſuffer me to diſtribute all their charities; ſo that I am much beloved by the poor people; and this old woman has been particularly obliged to me, for ſaving her from my father's

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anger, when ſhe had behaved very ill, and ſhe is now upon her good behaviour; and one of the conditions of my favour is, that ſhe keeps herſelf, as much as poſſible, from all intercourſe with her neighbours. I viſit her every day, that I may ſee how ſhe goes on; and ſhe will do all that I order her.—But how, my dear Mary, could you conſent to continue in ſuch a poor little hovel as this?"

"You forget," ſaid Mary, ſmiling, "that I am almoſt native to a cottage; that every hour of happineſs that I have ever known, has been ſpent beneath a cottage roof; and that I look forward to the poſſeſſion of one as the bleſſed port where I am to repoſe, after all the ſtorms with which I have been buffetted. If your old friend will allow me to remain with her, until I can hear from my dear Eleanor, I ſhall not have a wiſh ungratified; and, by the means of the wheel that I ſee there, I will take care that ſhe ſhall be no loſer by her hoſpitality."

"That

"That muſt not be," ſaid Anna.—"If I cannot take you home with me, I am very able to provide you with all you will want here."

"You will allow me to have my own way, I hope," returned Mary.—"If I could not ſupport myſelf, I ſhould be happy to be indebted to you; but while I can, I will not rob others, of what your bounty to me would take from them."

"How much do I always admire you," ſaid Anna.—"Nay, I almoſt envy you that education, and thoſe habits, which, while your talents and manners fit you to adorn the higheſt ſtation, enable you to provide for yourſelf in the loweſt: and yet, I fear, I ſhould not have courage to imitate you."

"You are not called upon to imitate me," ſaid Mary.—"Do you go on in your path, and leave me to purſue mine. *You* relieving the wants of the poor, and *I* taking care not to add to the number of thoſe who want your relief."

Anna

Anna now called in Joyce, and informed her, that Mary was to be her gueſt for ſome time. She reiterated the charge of ſecreſy and fidelity, and threatened her with the irrevocable loſs of her friendſhip, if ſhe ſuffered a word to eſcape her, to any creature concerning Mary.

"If ſhe is ſeen, and any queſtions are aſked," ſaid Anna, "you are to ſay that this young lady is your grand-daughter, and that your daughter has ſent her to you, to get her a place."

"No, no," ſaid Mary, her natural love of truth kindling in her breaſt, "let there be no falſehood: ſay I am a young perſon committed to your care. But all ſuch precautions will be needleſs: if you prevent any one from entering your houſe, I will take care that no one ſees me out of it."

Joyce engaged for reſerve and diſcretion, but was ready to die with the curioſity, which

circumſtances ſo unuſual awakened in her breaſt.

Mary now underſtood, that ſhe was as far diſtant from the place of her late confinement as ſo many hours of uninterrupted walking, as had paſſed between her eſcape and her arrival at the cottage, could carry her; and ſhe had reaſon to rejoice in that guiding hand of Providence, which had thus led her directly from all that ſhe had reaſon to fear or ſhun.

She now delivered her watch to Anna, requeſting her, as a favour, to advance her a few guineas on that pledge. Anna vehemently refuſed; called her unkind, and proud, in thus declining all obligations from her.

"Surely," ſaid Mary, "you wrong me.—Do I not even eagerly accept of every favour from your hands, which I really want? Did I want money, and could you ſpare it, you would find me equally willing to owe it to

your bounty; but in being poſſeſſed of this trinket, I am poſſeſſed of money. Shall I take yours, when I have ſufficient of my own? Would *you* do ſo in my caſe?"

"My dear Mary," ſaid Anna, embracing her, "you are always right. I bluſh at my own littleneſs; yet love you for your ſuperiority."

"Ah! my dear Anna," cried Mary, returning her careſſes, "when will you learn to do yourſelf juſtice? It is not that I excel you, but that *my* circumſtances demand one mode of acting, and *yours* call for another."

The two friends now parted; and Mary, ſcarcely crediting her good fortune, betook herſelf to the duties of her cottage life.

She ſat down to the old woman's wheel; and Joyce, who expected to behold the thread broken, and the whole mechaniſm deranged, could not contain her aſtoniſhment, on beholding the dexterity with which ſhe performed her work.

Mary had not experienced ſuch lightneſs of ſpirit, and ſuch calm of mind for many, many months paſt. Every thing around her reminded her of dear Llamamon. It is true, that Joyce did not at all reſemble her beloved Eleanor: but, while her thoughts were fixed on the latter, ſhe attended little to the former; and though her perſon was ſtill detained in Cumberland, her heart and ſoul were in Merionethſhire. Secure, as ſhe now conſidered herſelf, from the conſequences of any purſuit that might be made after her, no other anxiety remained upon her mind, but that which her uncertainty as to the ſtate of Mr. Ellis's health, and the burthen that ſhe might eventually be to him and William, impreſſed them.

The ſad neceſſity, however, under which ſhe had acted, acquitted her (to herſelf) of any intemperance in her conduct, and enabled her to look up with the honeſt conſciouſneſs attendant on diſintereſted integrity.

Cheered by these reflections, her spirits began to flow in their natural channel; gaiety returned to her heart, and sparkled in her eyes.

The homely viands that Joyce spread before her, seemed, to her, the most delicious fare that she had ever tasted since her departure from Llamamon: and she sunk to a more undisturbed sleep, upon the hard filled straw mattrass, than any that had closed her eyes since last she rested under a cottage roof.

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## CHAP. XV.

ANNA was, with Mary, early the next morning, loaded with all ſhe thought could contribute to amuſement or comfort. She brought her twenty guineas, as the price of her watch, pen, ink, and paper, with a few books; and a baſket filled with daintier victuals than Joyce's larder could afford.

Mary received all but the laſt, with joy and gratitude; but ſhe abſolutely refuſed the contents of the baſket.

"Why,"

"Why," ſaid ſhe, "ſhould I endeavour to teach myſelf a diſtinction between different kinds of food, which a twelve month's luxurious living has *not* taught me, and which it would now be my greateſt misfortune to learn? Never, ſince I quitted Merionethſhire, did I eat ſo delicious a ſupper, as that with which I regaled laſt night; and I rejoiced in this evidence, that cleanlineſs and hunger are all the requiſites I ſhall ever find neceſſary to conſtitute a feaſt."

"How much happier, then," cried Anna, "will you be, than more than half the world!"

"It is a happineſs," returned Mary, "that is in the power of every body to attain. But the poor ſpoil their meals with ſluttiſhneſs, and the rich with too much nicety."

"Could my mother hear you," ſaid Anna, "I am ſure all her prejudices would be done away, and I ſhould have the happineſs of affording you an aſylum in her houſe."

"No," replied Mary, "that would not be.—"I ſhould ſtill be the perſon who prefers, as a huſband, the peaſant to the lord; and I know this to be a ſin, in the eyes of thoſe who think it any ſin at all, that is inexpiable."

"That you ſhould prefer virtue to vice," replied Anna, "I hope you will do me the juſtice to believe, does not aſtoniſh me; but Lord St. Albans has the ſuffrage of the whole world in his favour, and therefore *I* cannot help a little wondering, and ſtill more lamenting, that you do not take a worthy man, recommended to you by your parents, and who would pleaſe you in an exalted rank, and ſecure to you the affluence that is your right, rather than perſiſt in your attachment to a perſon, perhaps equally worthy with Lord St. Albans, but certainly ſo much below you, in every ſenſe of the word, that, forgive me, my dear, I cannot help thinking ſome little ſhame attaches to you, for the pertinacity with which you adhere to him."

"In the firſt place," ſaid Mary, "Lord St. Albans is *not* worthy; as I think his conduct to me has fully evinced. But were he as worthy as virtue could make him, that would not juſtify me in violating my engagements with one, who never, by deed, by word, or thought, gave me cauſe to complain of him. One who is my equal in all that dignifies human nature, and who, when he was my ſuperior in the gifts of fortune, never wavered, one inſtant, from the integrity of his attachment to me. But not alone the juſtice of the thing has decided my choice.—I own, I have alſo conſulted the feelings of my heart; and, as I ſhould be the moſt diſhoneſt perſon in the world to abandon William, ſo I ſhould be the moſt unhappy.—Nor do I know of any law, human or divine, that requires that I ſhould ſacrifice my integrity and my happineſs to the artificial modes and arbitrary ranks of life, which, however they may, upon the whole, be productive of benefit, if, in fact, they are ſo, muſt, in their

very nature, be meant to yield to the immutable laws of reafon, and of virtue."

"I know not how it is," faid Anna;—"but, whatever is the argument, while I am with you, you perfuade me you are in the right; yet, when I am abfent, I again return to thinking you are in the wrong."

"It is the unufualnefs of the circumftance," replied Mary, "that thus keeps your mind undecided. But fuppofe, for a moment, that I was the farmer's daughter, and William the Baronet's fon, would you think that the difcovery of his rank and fortune would exculpate him from treachery and falfehood, if he refufed to fulfil thofe vows in his more exalted ftate, that he had fworn to me a thoufand times, when he believed himfelf what the world calls my equal?"

"No, I fhould think him very treacherous and very bafe to abandon you," replied Anna; "and yet, perhaps, it is what moft men would do: but I fhall fuppofe you, in that cafe, as handfome as you are now, and then your beauty would juftify his choice."

Mary

Mary ſmiled.

"And ſo worth in a man is not as good a juſtification, when we go againſt the world's opinion, as is beauty in a woman?" ſaid ſhe. "It is indeed very honourable to have reſpect to ſuch opinions."

"To be ſure," returned Anna, "merit ought to be of more value than beauty; yet every body ſeems to think your conduct monſtrous and ſtrange, while we both know more inſtances than one, where the inferiority has been on the woman's ſide, and beauty, like charity, has covered the ſin."

"What is this," ſaid Mary, "but prejudice?"

"Not quite ſo, I believe, neither," replied Anna.—"I have heard my mother ſay, that the real difference conſiſts in the power the man has of raiſing his wife to his own rank in ſociety, and the degradation the woman muſt ſuffer, by ſinking to that of her huſband's."

"And what," ſaid Mary, warmly, "is rank but prejudice?"

"But your duty to your parents is not a prejudice," ſaid Anna.—"Do you owe nothing to thoſe from whom you derive your exiſtence?"

"Oh yes," cried Mary; "I owe them much.—"Reſpect, tenderneſs, ſupport, and ſuccour, are the unalienable duties of children to their parents.—Obedience, with the reſerve only of the duties we owe to God, and our fellow-creatures, is alſo their due:—a mind free from reſentment or paſſion, let them act towards us as they will; a ready forgetfulneſs of unkindneſs, and a prompt, and even eager aptitude to return to *unreſerved* ſubmiſſion, whenever the circumſtances, by which we have been compelled to relax in this duty, are removed.—All this I owe, as a child, to my parents: all this, I call Heaven to witneſs, I have ever been moſt deſirous to pay them: and all, and every part of this I will perform, whenever they will put it into my power to do ſo."

"But

"But ought not a child to fuffer a parent to direct her choice in fo important a point as marriage?" afked Anna.

"If there is one particular more than another, in which a child ought *not* to fubmit to direction, it is my opinion, in this very point," returned Mary.—"The duties of the marriage ftate are perfonal. The moft unlimited obedience to the parent, in the adoption of a companion for life, will not enable any child to perform the duties confequent to fuch obedience. What would it avail me, to plead before that bar, where tranfgreffion, in one particular, is a violation of the whole law, that I was a blamelefs daughter, while it could be proved that I was a faulty wife?"

"But why *fhould* you be faulty?" faid Anna.

"It is not of *neceffity*, I allow, that I fhould," replied Mary.—"We have heard of irreproachable wives, even to hufbands, whom they had taken upon compulfion, and whofe after conduct had juftified them for

having

having made ſuch compulſion neceſſary, before they would take them: but theſe are heroines; and no diſcreet women, in calculating her own powers for performing the indiſpenſable duties of life, will reckon upon heroiſm: if *guilt*, however, is not the neceſſary conſequence of taking a huſband at the will of another, *contrary* to our own *unhappineſs*; and I have not yet found any law, by which I am obliged to make myſelf unhappy, to gratify the *unreaſonable* wiſhes, even of a parent."

"And ſo," replied Anna, "a parent is the perſon in the world who has the leaſt to do with the marriage of a child."

"Have I ſaid any thing that will juſtify ſuch a concluſion?" returned Mary.—"On the contrary, a parent has, in my opinion, more intereſt in the marriage of the child than any other perſon, the child only excepted:—and a wiſe and kind parent will, from childhood, implant ſuch principles in the mind of the child, and will eſtabliſh ſuch an

an influence over it by affection, as will effectually secure this interest, when the subject of marriage comes to be debated between them.—I speak this from experience. Stubborn and self-willed as you may think me, William would have made no progress in my affection, unsanctioned by the approbation of my dear mother at Llamamon.—And even after he was become very dear to me, I gave him no power over me, but such as had reference to her will: nor, until after she had allowed me to engage myself to him, should I have hesitated, at her command, to have broken off all intercourse with him for ever. When my love had once received her sanction, she had herself no right to require me to withdraw it; and William, having obtained rights over me, which none but himself could resign, it follows, that without his consent, I could not deprive him of them."

"But Eleanor was not your real mother," said Anna.—"And if you would have done so much for her, why will you do so little for

Lady

Lady Caroline? She who never ſanctioned your love to William; and when the diſcovery of your birth has made ſo material an alteration in circumſtances?"

"You know," returned Mary, "that I like not to make thoſe pleas of exculpation I ſo juſtly might make. But though the duties I have before pointed out are due to parents, of whatever diſpoſition they may be, and under whatever circumſtances we diſcover the relationſhip that they ſtand in to us, the ſacrifices that are due to affection, and well tried care and tenderneſs, can never be demanded by unkindneſs and neglect. Had Sir James and Lady Caroline a right to take me from the poverty and obſcurity, to which they had ſo long condemned me, only to make me more miſerable, by their notice, than ever I had been made by their forgetfulneſs? Was I bound, by their word, to abjure every affection that had grown with my growth, and every principle with which my mind was imbued? Was obedience to the unjuſtifiable commands of merely nominal parents,

parents, to ftand in the ftead of every confi-deration that I owed to my lover, and every duty that I owed to myfelf? No, my dear Anna, I confider my adherence to William as a facred duty, the violation of which would juftly be punifhed with mifery to myfelf.— Nor do I think I have given any wound to the obedience due from me to my parents, while I refift only where it is unjuft to yield; and that this obedience cannot be more per-fect, will, I truft, be confidered by my candid friend as my misfortune, and not my fault."

"If you are wrong," faid Anna, "it is dangerous to liften to you; for you always perfuade me that you are right."

"I believe myfelf to be fo," replied Mary: "but I have preached enough: and, after all, how much happier are you, the tendernefs of whofe parents leaves no doubt upon your mind, that *unreferved* obedience is as much your duty as it is your pleafure."

Mary

Mary could not reftrain a tear, which fell upon her cheek as fhe made this reflection; and Anna's tears flowed in currents.

"Oh! my dear friend," cried fhe, embracing her, "how it breaks my heart, that you, who are fuperior to moft of your fex in excellence, fhould come fhort of any of them in happinefs!"

"My felicity is to come," replied Mary. "I firmly believe I fhall one day be the happy and unperfecuted wife of William, and perhaps the fupport of thofe parents, who, in fuppofing themfelves mafters of inexhauftible wealth, are but haftening the fafter to their deftruction."

Anna declared, that, in her opinion, there was no happinefs that her beloved friend did not deferve: and, with thefe words, fhe quitted her, leaving her at leifure to write her letter to Eleanor.

## CHAP. XVI.

THE emotions of Mary's heart gave unſteadineſs to her fingers, as ſhe detailed to her beloved friend the various events that had happened to her ſince the ſuſpenſion of their intercourſe. She explained her preſent ſituation, and referred herſelf wholly to her Merionethſhire friends, as to what ſhe ſhould further do. She thought it unneceſſary to urge for a ſpeedy anſwer to her letter; and having written it, ſhe betook herſelf to her wheel, ſoothed with the thought, that many days would not paſs before ſhe was again under

under the direction of those friends, in whose kindness and wisdom she had an unlimited confidence.

In the mean time, she employed the old woman to procure for her, from the neighbouring town, materials for the kind of dress that, she flattered herself, would henceforth be suitable to her situation in life.—These she made up herself; and between the fulness of employment that this gave her, and the daily cheering visits of her kind Anna, the hours passed swiftly and pleasantly away.

Nothing, however, could prevent her from marking how they passed, or hinder her from calculating the probable time in which she might receive an answer from Eleanor.

A week was now gone. The old woman was sent daily to the post town, in pursuit of the expected letter. Each day she returned empty handed; and every morning Mary arose

arofe to that flutter of hope, and every evening fhe funk into that ftillnefs of difappointment, which all muft have experienced, who have looked to that fource of univerfal intelligence for the decifion of an event, upon which was to depend the happinefs or the conduct of their lives.

But, as the difappointment became repeated, the hope faded away; and Mary, having exhaufted every comfortable conjecture, as to the caufe of this unaccountable filence on the part of Eleanor, began to fink into defpair.

Again fhe wrote, directing her letter, this time, to the vicarage: the precaution, however, availed her nothing: fhe had ftill no anfwer.

"My dear Mr. Ellis is dead!" cried fhe, burfting into tears:—" but where, then, is my dear mother? Does *fhe* not live? Is it poffible

poſſible ſhe can be removed from Llamamon?"

To write to William, except at the vicarage or the cottage, was, ſhe knew, to expoſe herſelf to diſcovery, without a chance of the letter reaching his hands. She doubted not, but that every individual at Llanbeder Farm would take a pleaſure in betraying her to her parents: nor could ſhe ſuppoſe that William was upon ſuch terms with his family, as to make it poſſible that a letter, directed to his father's houſe, would be delivered to him.

What was ſhe to do? Once more ſhe reſolved to write to Eleanor at the cottage;—but ſhe reſolved this as almoſt her laſt effort, and as an experiment from which ſhe could hope little. It is, however, ſo painful to reſign hope, that Mary ſuffered it to linger in her boſom, in oppoſition to her reaſon, and almoſt to her conviction.

She

She was perſuaded, that nothing could prevent her kind Eleanor from replying to her letters but her never having received them; and it was but too evident that the cauſe, whatever it might be, that had operated to the miſcarriage of her firſt letter, would probably have a like influence on the others.

To write, however, was all ſhe could do; and it was not until, after having written four letters, and having waited three months in vain for a reply, that, in a confirmed deſpair, ſhe deſiſted from any further application, and gave up her mind to the moſt gloomy proſpects.

In theſe dreary circumſtances, the affectionate ſympathy of Anna could do no more than ſooth her. For the future, ſhe could not ſuggeſt any thing but what, to her apprehenſion, was intolerably painful: and, between the ſad alternative of procuring a ſubſiſtence by ſervitude, and returning under the

tyranny

tyranny of her parents, Anna, unaccuſtomed to all the ſoftneſs and indulgencies of life, ventured to recommend the laſt as moſt eligible.

Mary's mind, however, was not only by nature ſtronger, but, by habit and education, ſhe had learnt to conſider honeſt induſtry as the ſource of the pureſt happineſs. It was not that ſhe ſhrunk from any labour, that her preſent deſerted ſituation might call her to, but that ſhe trembled when ſhe reflected, that any attempt to provide for herſelf would expoſe her to a diſcovery, from the conſequences of which ſhe had no one to whom ſhe could appeal for protection: yet, to remain where ſhe was, appeared, to her, puſillanimous and reprehenſible. From the limited exertions, that, in her preſent ſituation, ſhe would be able to make, ſhe could ſcarcely hope to be able to ſubſiſt herſelf:—ſhe was an object of perpetual uneaſineſs and ſolicitude to her friend; her own mind was becoming a prey to dejection, and almoſt to deſpondency:

despondency: and when ſhe aſked herſelf why all this ſhould be ſo? ſhe could not but acknowledge, that if ſhe neglected to rouſe herſelf, it would be wholly chargeable to her own weakneſs of mind.

"Of what," cried ſhe, "do I complain? "I have had eaſe, affluence, and ſplendor, in my choice; but ſuch were the conditions annexed, that I have preferred labour, poverty, and obſcurity.—Theſe remain to me: not, it is true, under the exact circumſtances that I would have choſen, but under ſuch as will ſecure my freedom of mind, my integrity, and my affections, inviolate. Is not this a copious ſource of happineſs? I have health—I have ſtrength.—My hands have been taught the works of induſtry, and my underſtanding has been confirmed by the leſſons of wiſdom and of virtue. How much happier am I than half of God's creatures. Shall I then ſit down in grief and deſpondency? The world is before me.—Providence is my guide, and I will follow where that leads me."

In consequence of these reflections, Mary informed her friend, on her next visit, that she was resolved to quit the cottage the moment that she could procure any situation, where, by a vigorous exertion of the talents that were intrusted to her care, she could provide herself with food and raiment: and she entreated Anna not to be nice in selecting the means for so desirable an end.

"If I can be placed," said she, "where I have a tolerable chance to remain undiscovered by my parents, and where nothing is exacted from me beyond my strength, or inimical to my principles, I shall think myself sufficiently happy for the present: and as to the future, no further will I trouble myself concerning it, than to take care not to overshadow, by any impropriety now, the felicity that may yet be in store for me in time to come."

Anna wept, and wondered : but ſhe ſtrenuouſly oppoſed what ſhe called ſo ſtrange a reſolution.

"Wait here a little longer," ſaid ſhe :—"who knows what may happen."

"I have waited," returned Mary, "perhaps too long.—And how can I expect that any good will happen to me, if I do not even take the trouble to ſeek it ?"

"But to be a ſervant !" urged Anna.

"It is the next ſtep," replied Mary, "in the ſcale of dependance, to being a ſlave :—but this ſcale has been fixed by Providence : and if it is his will that I ſhall be placed nearly at the loweſt point, it does not become me to murmur. Beſides, how many comforts attend ſervitude in this country, ſuperior to thoſe which are attainable in ſituations more independant :—and am I not, in fact, more free—more *my own*, when I owe my ſubſiſtence to my honeſt induſtry, than half the titled ſycophants and penſioned hirelings, who will look down upon me with ſcorn ?"

Anna ftill perfifted :—but Mary, once convinced that fhe was right, was not to be fhaken in her refolution ; and the converfation ended with a promife, very unwillingly given on Anna's part, that fhe would endeavour to find her friend a fituation in fome of the neighbouring families, in the capacity of a fervant.

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## CHAP. XVII.

THOSE, whofe fate it has been to feek any advantage, however fmall, know that it is not to be obtained but after many difappointments.

All

All the world ſeems then engaged in the ſame purſuit, and every body to be more ſucceſsful than ourſelves.

For ſome time, Anna's daily viſits brought only details of projects defeated, and expectations rendered vain. Mary's talents ſeemed not to be ſuited to *any* body; and nothing appeared to be more difficult, than to procure an induſtrious and well-inſtructed young perſon the means of putting her abilities to any uſe.

Mary took all theſe rebuffs very patiently. " Fortune will be in a better temper ſoon," ſaid ſhe :—" for, when I conſider the humility of my purſuits, I cannot believe ſhe will long employ herſelf in thwarting me, while ſhe has ſo many higher ſtages on which to diſplay her fantaſtical genius. In the mean time, ſhe applied herſelf cloſely to the labours of the wheel; and, notwithſtanding the temptations that Anna continually threw in her way, ſhe ſcarcely allowed herſelf an hour's

 recreation

recreation each day in reading or drawing. She confidered herfelf as being on the eve of bidding adieu to thefe gratifications for ever; and fhe thought fhe could not too foon begin to wean herfelf from them.

At length Anna, one day, appeared with a countenance expreffive both of fuccefs and dejection.

"Well, my dear Mary," faid fhe, in a languid tone, "you may now, if you pleafe, become a fervant. But let me once more entreat you to paufe, before you enter into fo degrading a courfe, and which, whatever happy change of fortune may befal you, will always remain as fome degree of difgrace upon you."

"A difgrace!" returned Mary.—"Surely not! as a proof, I hope, that I know how to affert the real dignity of human nature—felf-dependance and perfonal labour—rather than a fubfiftence upon charity."

"Unperſuadable as you are," returned Anna, "I muſt love you ſtill. If then it muſt be ſo, you may enter upon perſonal labour this very day."

"Where, and with whom?" ſaid Mary.

"Alas!" replied Anna, "this moſt ineligible of all things does not preſent itſelf to you in the moſt eligible form that even it might aſſume; and I ſhould not have had the heart to have offered you ſuch a ſituation, but that my mother, having often heard my inquiries for you, named you to the perſon without my concurrence, and after that, I had no option."

"My deareſt friend," cried Mary, "let me entreat you to conquer this weakneſs, and do not give me reaſon to think that I have more obligations to your mother than to you. Tell me, where is my aſylum to be?"

"I can ſcarcely tell where, or with whom," replied Anna.—"The perſon has formerly been the waiting-maid to a lady of faſhion, but having married ſomebody with money,

now gives herſelf the airs of a lady. She has been only a few weeks in this part of the country, in a family where we viſit; but I have only ſeen her twice, and I care not if I were never to ſee her again; or if I had never ſeen her at all."

"Come, come," ſaid Mary, ſmiling;—"your kindneſs for me makes you peeviſh. I have no ſuch dread of people who are not ladies born, as you ſeem to have. I have had too much experience of the true, not to feel a reaſonable hope, that the counterfeit may be the more tolerable creature of the two; and I am not inclined to think the worſe of my new miſtreſs, for having once been in the ſituation which I am now entering upon."

"New miſtreſs!" ſaid Anna, with a ſigh. "What a perſon to be your miſtreſs! She is vulgar, violent, and overbearing. It is to her having quarreled with her laſt ſervant, and having turned her away at a minute's warning, although the poor girl is two hundred miles from her old friends, and has no

means

means of getting to them, that you are indebted for an opportunity of entering her ſervice. Does not this ſhake your reſolution? or are you pleaſed to have a freſh means to diſplay your heroiſm?"

"Alas!" ſaid Mary, "ſhe then finds me in the ſituation to which ſhe has reduced this poor girl. I am more than two hundred miles from my friends, and I know not how to get to them:—if, indeed (added ſhe, tears ſtarting to her eyes) I have *any* friends in the world."

"Oh! how you break my heart!" ſaid Anna.—"Why will you not let me ſupply the place of all thoſe friends to you?"

"That cannot be," returned Mary.—"Pray urge me no more"

"If it *cannot* be, there is an end to my hopes," ſaid Anna.—"And I will confeſs, that there is one circumſtance that may perhaps make a temporary abode with this fury tolerable to you: but I heſitate to mention it: for I know, that when once you have

heard it, nothing will deter you from entering into her ſervice."

"Name it, then," cried Mary, eagerly.

"She is going," replied Anna, "in a few days, into Merionethſhire, where her huſband has ſome property, and, as I underſtand, not far from Llamamon—and————"

"Oh! Heavens!" exclaimed Mary, interrupting her friend, "how could you ſo long conceal a circumſtance which fills me with the greateſt joy. Enter into her ſervice! yes, that I would, were ſhe all the furies united in one.—Where is ſhe? Where can I ſee her? Is there not a danger that I ſhall loſe her place even while we are talking?"

"No," replied Anna; "there is no danger of that: my mother has named you to her, and ſhe has promiſed, that "if the creature is tolerably decent, ſhe will entertain her for the preſent."

"Let me be gone," ſaid Mary, "and confirm her in this favourable deſign. I quite

 tremble,

tremble, left, in this interval, ſhe ſhould find ſomebody more than tolerably decent."

"I have one favour to aſk of you," ſaid Anna, "that you muſt not refuſe me.—It is, that you will not ſuffer her to call you Mary.—Indeed you cannot refuſe me; for I have always called you to my mother by the name of Fanny, wiſhing you to retain as little as poſſible of your *real* ſelf, in the degrading ſtation into which you are going.—I have alſo repreſented you as the grand-daughter of old Joyce.—Remember theſe points."

Mary ſmiled.—"I am willing to make a greater ſacrifice than this to your prejudices," ſaid ſhe.—"And indeed, although Mary is ſo common a name, that it may belong to any body, it will certainly be more diſcreet to avoid every ſound that might call to the mind of any one the poſſibility that I am the perſon, after whom there is probably ſearch making."

This point being ſettled, Mary, with the greateſt alacrity, prepared herſelf to appear before Mrs. Leeſon; and, having embraced her friend with tears, and many acknowledgments, ſhe took the old woman with her as a kind of ſanction, and ſet forward to the place to which ſhe was directed.

After a walk of three miles, ſhe arrived at the gentleman's houſe, where Mrs. Leeſon was at preſent upon a viſit, and, having told her buſineſs, ſhe was immediately uſhered into a well-furniſhed dreſſing-room.

Here, in an eaſy chair, ſhe found a little fat roſy-faced woman, of about the age of fifty, adorned with all the gaiety of fifteen; yet affecting, in her air and addreſs, all the ſtatelineſs and impertinence appertaining to age and dignity.

Near her was placed a young woman, buſily employed in preparing ſome article of dreſs, and who, from time to time, caſt on

Mrs. Leeſon a look of the moſt ſervile apprehenſion and ſolicitude.

"So child," ſaid the lady in the eaſy chair, with a toſs of her head, "you are the young perſon, I ſuppoſe, who are ſo deſirous of waiting upon me. It is really aſtoniſhing (continued ſhe, turning to the young woman, who was at work) how people of diſtinction are ſought after. I remember, when I took you into my family, I was quite confounded with choice. I believe I rejected fifty petitioners, and perhaps, after all, took the worſt of the ſet."

To this needleſs and ill-natured remark, the perſon to whom it was addreſſed ventured only to diſſent by a humble "I hope not, Madam."

"You hope not, indeed! Pray let me ſee you mend your manners, then. I have not forgot your careleſſneſs of yeſterday, nor your idleneſs this morning. If I am not better ſerved in future, you ſhall troop, I can tell you."

This

This feemed to be faid with the defign to imprefs Mary with a proper awe, as fome ingenious governors have thought proper to correct a plebeian companion, to gain an influence over the mind of a refractory Prince: for, turning to Mary, fhe faid, "I underftand, child, that you can do no one thing—*perfectly* ignorant:—yet I warrant you think yourfelf able to wait upon a lady of fafhion. Thefe girls are fo vain! But you are willing to learn, I fuppofe? Can you do as you are bid? You fee I will be obeyed: but if I find you fubmiffive, and not incorrigibly awkward, I believe (as my good friend Lady Caroline ufed to fay) I fhall tolerate you."

Mary ftarted at the name of Lady Caroline; but recollecting there might be many Lady Carolines, fhe compofed herfelf; and repreffing, at once, her indignation, and her defire to run away from an engagement that threatened her with fo many difagreeables, fhe replied, "I will endeavour to pleafe you, Madam, and hope I fhall fucceed."

"You

"You don't pleaſe me," returned the lady, eying her with more attention.—"I am not fond of beauties, and I ſee you think yourſelf one. However, you are decently dreſſed, and, provided you give yourſelf no airs, I will entertain you."

Mary curtſied.

"You muſt ſtay with me from this very hour," continued the lady.—"I have been dreſſed by the hands of this dawdle ſince I was obliged to diſpatch the inſolent that waited on me laſt, and I am quite weary of being the figure ſhe makes me. I ſay nothing of wages (added ſhe): literally, you can *deſerve nothing*.—You ought rather to pay *me*, for I ſhall have you to teach: but with a perſon of my fortune, you may be ſure of being properly conſidered."

Mary readily aſſented; for, after the ſpecimen ſhe had of her new miſtreſs's manners, ſhe fixed her hopes alone on the

purpoſed

purpofed journey into Wales, and would have found it difficult, without fuch a profpect, to have prevailed with herfelf to have accepted the fituation offered her.

She was therefore little concerned as to the emolument of it, being refolved to quit it, as foon as ever fhe had fatisfied herfelf as to the actual fituation of affairs at Llamamon. This determination made her indifferent as to fome other circumftances, that now ftruck her mind :—fuch as, the hazard there might be in remaining in a family that fometimes refided in London, and with a perfon who appeared, by fome means or other, not totally unacquainted with people of fafhion.

Her eagernefs to find the means of fubfifting herfelf, would not have overcome that difcretion which required that fhe fhould keep herfelf concealed : but the hope of revifiting Llamamon fuperfeded this precaution for the prefent, and fhe, being now refolved

resolved to remain no longer with Mrs. Leeson than while she could accompany her into Wales, she considered any objection to her knowledge and acquaintance in the metropolis as done away, by her own resolution not to accompany her thither.

She charged old Joyce with her most tender acknowledgments to Anna; and with an assurance, that whatever might be her situation, she would, from time to time, inform her of it.

CHAP.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

## CHAP. XVIII.

MARY now found herſelf in perfectly new and very unpleaſant circumſtances.

The manners of thoſe with whom ſhe was henceforward to aſſociate, reſembled neither the ruſticity of the companions of her cottage life, nor the refinement which ſhe had been accuſtomed to, ſince her reſidence with her parents. The pretenſions to ſuperiority and good breeding, with the real ignorance and coarſeneſs that mark the manners and converſation of the generality of ſervants,

were,

were, to the good tafte and good fenfe of Mary, peculiarly difgufting.

She faw, with furprife, that it was rather the vices than the intelligence and urbanity of their fuperiors, that were the objects to merit their imitation; and fhe found that it was not thofe who refide neareft the fountain of information, who drink moft copioufly of its ftreams.

By confining herfelf, however, almoft wholly to Mrs. Leefon's chamber, fhe fought an afylum from a converfation in which fhe knew not how to join, while, by her obligingnefs to others, and her readinefs to be obliged, fhe preferved herfelf from all imputation of impertinence or pride.

This afylum was, however, fure to be violated, whenever it was entered by Mrs. Leefon. Mary had not been able to form to herfelf an idea of fo capricious and low-minded a tyrant, as fhe found this lady

lady to be. To pleaſe her was impoſſible, becauſe it was one of her chief pleaſures not to be pleaſed. She ſeemed to fear that her ſuperiority would be forgotten, if ſhe ſuffered a moment to paſs, in which her power was not felt. To evince the delicacy of her taſte, ſhe was diſſatisfied with all that was done for her; and, to mark the extent of her authority, ſhe was perpetually impoſing mortifications and puniſhments. Nor was ſhe only *ſyſtematically* oppreſſive: her natural temper was harſh and violent; and the reſtraint which ſhe had been obliged to put it under, during her years of dependence on the will of others, ſhe now indemnified herſelf for, by the moſt unlimited indulgence of every impulſe of an ungoverned mind. As ſhe was illiterate and vulgar, her expreſſions were coarſe and offenſive; and not unfrequently poor Mary eſcaped the weight of her hand, only by her dexterity in eluding the blow: yet was ſhe reſolved to endure all. The hopes of once more reviſiting Llamamon, gave

gave her courage to ſupport every mortification and injury.

The few days, however, in which Anna had flattered Mary that the journey would be undertaken, were lengthened out beyond a week; and it was not until the tenth morning after ſhe had entered into the ſervice of Mrs. Leeſon, that ſhe ſaw herſelf on the road to Merionethſhire.

Mrs. Leeſon herſelf, and the young perſon before-mentioned, were the whole party;—and Mary had already reaſon to believe, that although ſhe had a fellow ſufferer in Miſs Thornton, ſhe was not likely to find in her a friend.

The ſentiments of compaſſion with which ſhe had at firſt regarded this perſecuted dependant, ſhe ſoon changed to feelings of diſapprobation and diſguſt. She perceived, that, however occaſionally ſhe might ſuffer under the immediate operation of Mrs. Leeſon's

Leeſon's paſſions, that Miſs Thornton was, in general, well ſatisfied with her ſituation; that ſhe knew how to make the beſt of it;— and that there was no adulation, however groſs, or ſcurrility, however abject, that ſhe was not ready to practiſe, and to profit by.

Hence ſhe was not unfrequently in high favour with Mrs. Leeſon; and there ſeemed to ſubſiſt between them no common degree of confidence.

Miſs Thornton, who dreaded any participation in the advantages ſhe drew from her influence over Mrs. Leeſon, ſyſtematically did all in her power to put her at variance with her ſervants, and more eſpecially with the one who was immediately about her perſon. The ſuperiority of Mary's manners and appearance, to all who had hitherto filled that ſtation, marked her inſtantly as a more alarming object of jealouſy to Miſs Thornton, than any that ſhe had before met with.

Hence

Hence ſhe felt towards her a more than common degree of hatred; and, as ſhe was by no means deficient in acuteneſs of underſtanding, ſhe ſoon diſcovered, in Mary, ſomething that ſeemed to agree ill with the ſituation of life which it was ſuppoſed ſhe had always filled. This diſcovery ſuggeſted a hope, that time might diſcloſe ſome circumſtances to the diſadvantage of one whom ſhe could not help conſidering as a dangerous rival; and, in this hope, ſhe watched every look and word of Mary, with a cloſeneſs of obſervation extremely diſtreſſing to the object of it.

If Miſs Thornton regarded Mary with ſuſpicion and fear, Mary felt nothing towards Miſs Thornton but diſlike and contempt; and Mrs. Leeſon lorded it over them both with inſolence and tyranny.

This friendly party were now, however, ſhut up within the narrow limits of a traveſling coach; and it behoved each of them to make the beſt ſhe could of the other.

The

The journey was begun early in the morning, and, for ſome time, Mrs. Leeſon preſerved a profound ſilence, which impoſed equal taciturnity upon her companions. At length, rouſing herſelf from the ſtate of half inſenſibility, in which ſhe had until then remained, ſhe exclaimed, " Thank Heaven! this duty is over! To be ſure, Mrs. Barton is a mighty good ſort of perſon, and no doubt a perſon of faſhion, or I am ſure I ſhould not have viſited her; and the neighbourhood is tolerable. Lady Watſon is not totally unlike the people of our world; but, to thoſe who are uſed to ſuch ſociety as town affords, a ſojourn in the country is, as my dear Lady Caroline uſed to ſay, a heavy buſineſs, a complete bore."

Mary felt herſelf bluſh at the name of Lady Caroline, given as the authority of an opinion which ſhe had ſo often heard uttered by the Lady Caroline whom ſhe had ſo much reaſon to dread: and ſhe bluſhed a deeper dye, on perceiving Miſs Thornton glance

glance a look towards her, as Mrs. Leeſon ſpoke.

"You have not been able to make much progreſs in the commiſſion which that charming lady gave you?" ſaid Miſs Thornton, in a flattering tone.

"Why really the commiſſion was attended with ſo many reſtrictions," replied Mrs. Leeſon, "that it was hardly poſſible to make any thing out. I was to inquire, and I was not to inquire.—I was to ſeek after a run-away daughter. and I was not to confeſs but that ſhe had it in her power either to go or ſtay.—I muſt ſay, my dear friend was a little whimſical in her directions. However, you will allow, child, that I often went ſlyly to work; but then Mrs. Barton knows nothing that paſſes beyond her own family; ſo it is no wonder if I was unſucceſsful."

"Perhaps, Madam, you have been leſs ſo than you think," replied Miſs Thornton, caſting a look from the corner of her eye on Mary, as ſhe ſat beſide her.—"You muſt

not expect to find a fugitive by the name ſhe bore before ſhe became one."

Mary's confuſion now became intolerable. She looked on one ſide, then on the other; took notice of every object within a mile's diſtance; put her handkerchief to her face; new-arranged the powdering and writing boxes, and ſtrove, by every means in her power, to give the converſation another turn.

All this was unnoticed by Mrs. Leeſon, who, aping the languid fine lady, ſat ſtretched at her eaſe, with her eyes half cloſed, and too much taken up with her own conſequence, to think of the concerns of any one elſe.

But nothing eſcaped the obſervation of Miſs Thornton, who, keeping her eye fixed upon Mary's face, ſaid, "I think, Mrs. Fanny, you called yourſelf the grand-daughter of that miſerable old creature who came with you to Mrs. Barton's.—Pray where do your *parents* live?"

"That

"That was a miſtake," returned Mary, in the greateſt confuſion.—"She is not my grandmother; ſhe is only a perſon to whoſe care I was committed."

"By the pariſh, I preſume," ſaid Miſs Thornton, with a ſcornful tone.—"Are you quite ſure you were not new chriſtened at her houſe?"

"Child, what are you talking about?" ſaid Mrs. Leeſon.—"Why do you ſpeak ſo familiarly to the girl? There will be no keeping her humble at this rate."

"Oh! Madam," replied Miſs Thornton, "I am not ſure ſhe has any reaſon to be humble.—I'll venture a ſmall wager you are not far from Lady Caroline's loſt ſheep."

"What!" cried Mrs. Leeſon, ſtarting, and turning her broad unmeaning eyes upon Mary.—"What's that you ſay?"

"Oh! Heavens!" exclaimed Mary.

"Oh! Heavens!" re-echoed Mrs. Leeſon: for at that moment an empty harveſt waggon, with four horſes, upon full gallop, driving violently againſt the coach,

 overturned

overturned it and its contents into a deep and wet ditch.

Notwithſtanding the real evil and danger in which all parties were equally involved, Mrs. Leeſon could find her voice only for ſcolding, railing, and ſelf-pity.—And ſo angry was ſhe, that even the ſervant, who came firſt to her aſſiſtance, came only to receive the firſt violence of her paſſion.

In ſpite, however, of her unthankfulneſs, and the difficulty of her ſituation, ſhe and her companions were at length extricated from their peril; but it was then found, that of the three, Mary was the only one who had eſcaped free from injury.

Miſs Thornton had one arm ſprained ſo as to be uſeleſs, and one leg ſo much bruiſed, that it was with difficulty ſhe crawled along. Mrs. Leeſon had received a violent contuſion on her face: and, beſides many other bruiſes and injuries, ſhe having been undermoſt,

was

was half ſuffocated with mud, and completely drenched by the water of the ditch. The people who belonged to the waggon, had come up time enough to have contributed to the relief of the ladies; but, having been received by Mrs. Leeſon with reproaches, and threatening of proſecution, they had repaid her with inſolence, and had left her to her fate, and to her ſervants, to repair the damage received as well as they could, by themſelves.

The coach was, for the preſent, rendered uſeleſs, and no better expedient could be thought of, than that, while the ſervants went in purſuit of proper people to repair it, that the ladies ſhould endeavour to make their way to a farm-houſe, which appeared at ſome little diſtance.

Miſs Thornton was unable to afford any aſſiſtance to Mrs. Leeſon, it being all ſhe could do to take care of herſelf, ſo that the

whole

whole burthen of this amiable ſufferer fell upon Mary.

Leaning, therefore, with the whole weight upon her arm, and almoſt dragging her to the ground, weeping, railing, and complaining by turns, her clothes disfigured with dirt, and dripping wet, Mrs. Leeſon moved ſlowly forward, often reproaching Mary with not having thrown herſelf under her, that ſhe might have been preſerved from the greateſt ſhare of the evil.

Mary replied not a word :—nor had ſhe a thought for the overturned coach, for the bruiſes and ſufferings of Mrs. Leeſon and Miſs Thornton, nor for the ſoiled and wet clothes which had fallen to her own ſhare.—Wholly was her mind occupied with the diſcovery which had been ſo opportunely delayed, but which ſhe could not hope that any circumſtance would wholly prevent.—She revolved again and again, in her thoughts, how ſhe ſhould act, but could find no

expedient from which ſhe could derive a hope of eſcaping the evil that threatened her. To touch the heart of Mrs. Leeſon with pity, ſhe knew was impoſſible; and the more ſo, as ſhe had now no doubt but that ſhe was the very perſon whom ſhe had often heard Lady Caroline ſpeak of as a favourite ſervant, for whom ſhe had been able to procure, while ſhe was in India, a very advantageous ſettlement. This tye, between her into whoſe hands ſhe had fallen, and her from whom it ſo much behoved her to eſcape, made her begin to believe that there was to be no end to her misfortunes, and that ſhe was indeed deſtined to paſs her life in captivity, or to become the wife of Lord St. Albans; and this latter ſhe ſtill looked upon as the worſe bondage of the two.

END OF VOL. III.

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